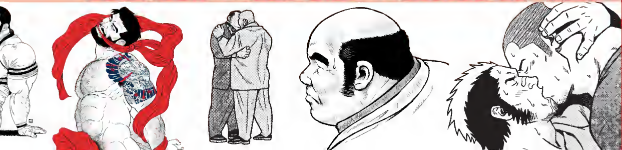
MASSIVE

GAY EROTIC MANGA AND THE MEN WHO MAKE IT

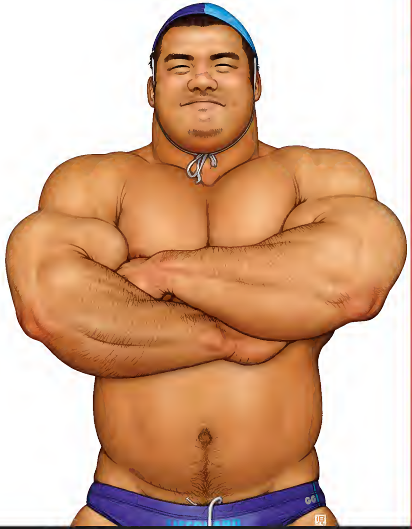
ANNE ISHII • CHIP KIDD • GRAHAM KOLBEINS



Big, burly, lascivious, and soft around the edges: welcome to the hyper-masculine world of Japanese gay manga! *Massive: Gay Erotic Manga and the Men Who Make It* is the first English-language anthology of its kind: an in-depth introduction to nine of the most exciting comic artists making work for a gay male audience in Japan. Jiraiya, Seizoh Ebisubashi and Kazuhide Ichikawa are three of the irresistibly seductive, internationally renowned artists featured in *Massive*, as well as Gengoroh Tagame, the subject of *The Passion of Gengoroh Tagame: Master of Gay Erotic Manga*.

Massive is a survey introduction to a diverse and important group of men responsible for some of the most emblematic gay manga drawn for fellow gay readers. Get to know each of its nine *mangaka* intimately, through candid interviews, photography, context-providing essays, illustrations and manga. *Massive* also includes the groundbreaking, titillating, and truly imaginative work of gay manga luminaries Takeshi Matsu, Fumi Miyabi, Inu Yoshi, Gai Mizuki and comic essayist Kumada Poohsuke.

Cover Design: Chip Kidd.
Cover Art: Jiraiya, Gengoroh Tagame, Gai Mizuki, Inu Yoshi, Fumi Miyabi, Seizoh Ebisubashi, Kazuhide Ichikawa, and Takeshi Matsu.



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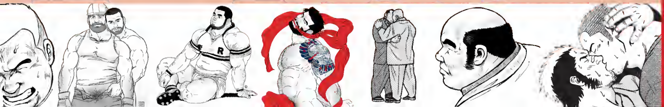

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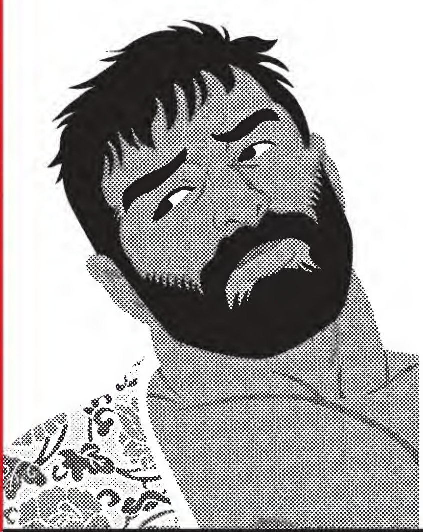

"Here's a book I want to give the highest recommendation to, but for very different reasons from those I would usually highlight for an amazingly effective collection of male-on-male erotic art—which this happens to be. But it is also fascinating and incredibly informative. The book's sections are not only beautiful, intelligent, sometimes humorous and always sexy as hell. They are also important, for what the artists have to say in the accompanying texts and essays, about themselves and about the art they make. This is a wonderful collection that every reader and writer should read. It's a knockout on so many different levels!"

Samuel R. Delany
Author of *Bread & Wine*, *Hogg*, and *Through the Valley of the Nest of Spiders*.

"In a time of passionless porn and corporate comics made with an eye on the next big movie franchise, it's important to be reminded that in the right hands, a pen can plumb the hottest, sweatiest places of our psyche. Each of these artists gives us naked desire and surprising emotional nuance, often leavened with raucous humor. I've never wanted a bunch of drawings to climb on top of me so much."

Nayland Blake
Artist, writer and curator

"*Massive* delivers a wealth of rewards, no matter where your male body-type fantasies fall on the bulky-to-lithe scale."

Howard Cruse
Author of *Stuck Rubber Baby* and *Wendel* and editor of the classic anthology *Gay Comix*.

"*Massive* is amazing. Bigger and bolder than Tom of Finland, this erotic manga transcends any genre, and stakes its claim on unbridled and unapologetic masculinity. Funny and beautiful, sexual and unworldly, it's a blessing to have this uniquely Japanese subculture now available in the West."

Andrew Sullivan
Founding editor, *The Dish*.

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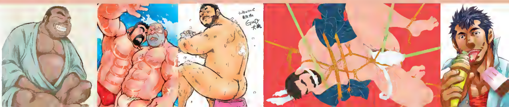
FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS



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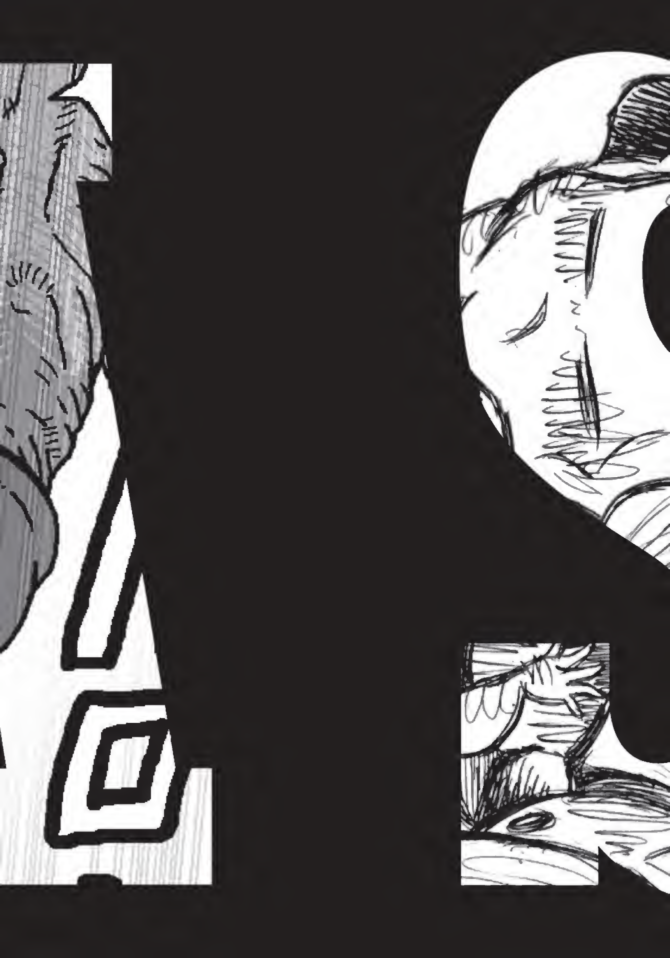

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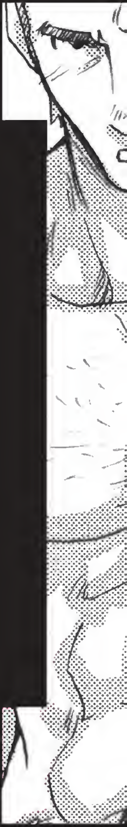
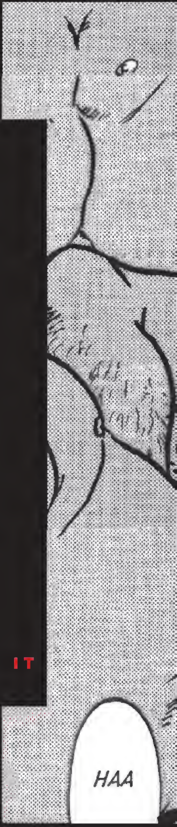


GAY EROTIC MANGA

AND THE MEN WHO MAKE IT



ANNE ISHII

CHIP KIDD

GRAHAM
KOLBEINS

Massive: Gay Erotic Manga and the Men Who Make It
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Cover design by Chip Kidd
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Seizoh Ebisubashi, Kazuhide Ichikawa, Takeshi Matsu, and Fumi Miyabi
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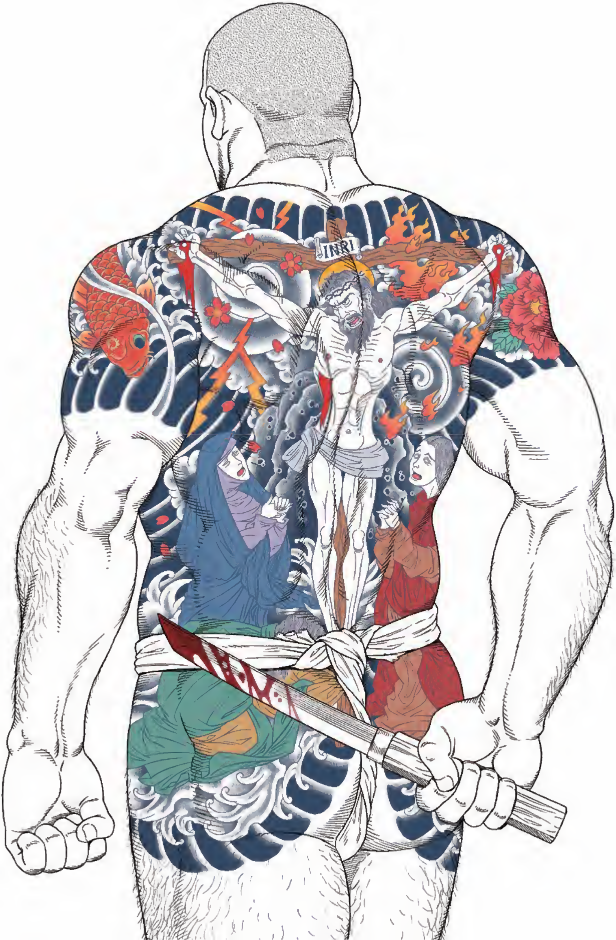
Visit us online for more gay manga:
massive-goods.com
gaymanga.tumblr.com

This book is designed right to left
to preserve the original Japanese formatting.
Begin reading comics and layouts from the upper right.
Japanese names are generally presented in the English order:
given name first, family name second.

GENGOROH TAGAME

PAGE 39

田亀源五郎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INU YOSHI

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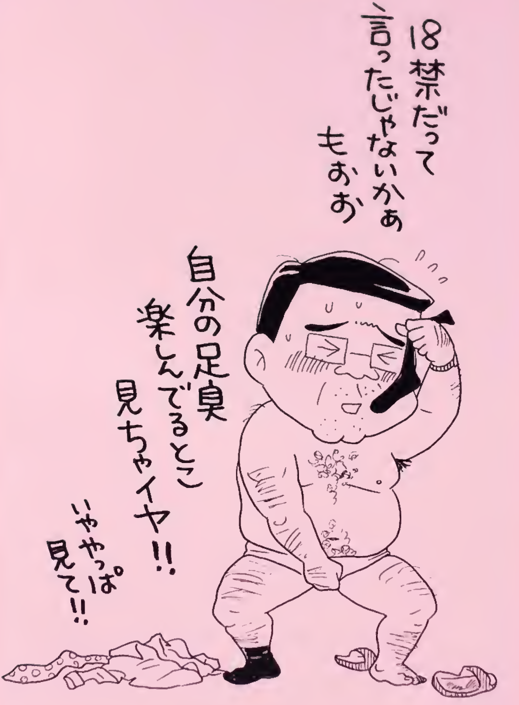
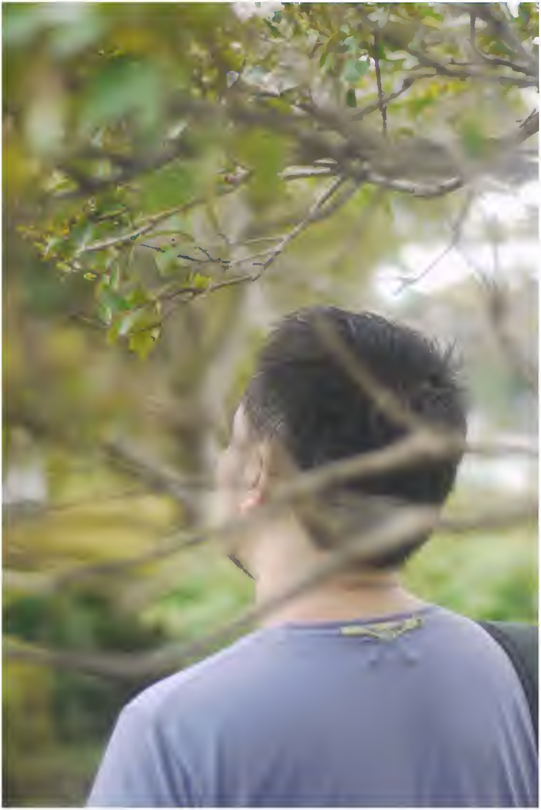
KUMADA POOHSUKE 熊田プウ助

PAGE 95


18禁だって言ったじゃないかぁもぉぉ
自分の足臭楽しんでるとこ見ちゃイヤ!!
いややっぱ見て!!



TAKESHI MATSU

PAGE 119

松武

JIRAIYA

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児雷也

児

GAI MIZUKI

PAGE 155

水樹凱

FUMI MIYABI

文雅

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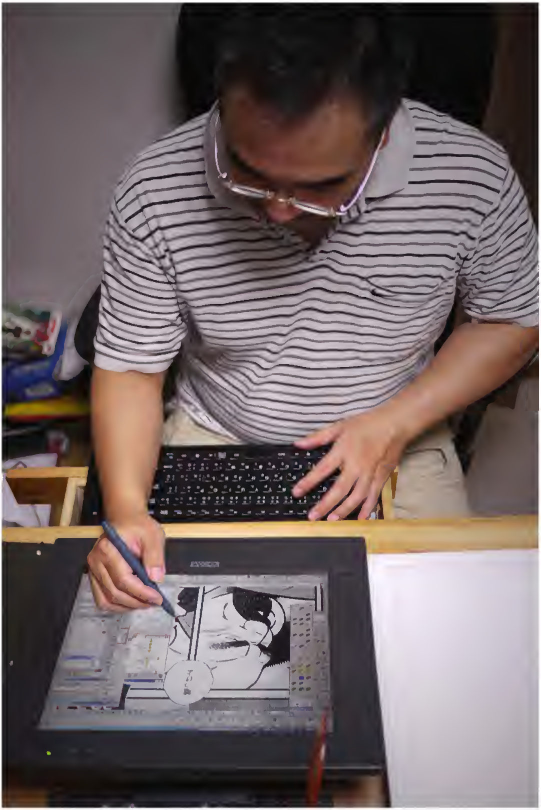
SEIZOH EBISUBASHI 戎橋政造

PAGE 207



KAZUHIDE ICHIKAWA

PAGE 241

市川和秀

ひにひ♥

IT FEELS TOO GOOD.*

BY **CHIP KIDD**

First there was *Passion*, now there's *Massive*.

If A, then B, right? Seriously, this volume is a milestone not only of the art of gay erotic manga, but of comic book history itself. Here, for the first time, are a group of Japanese comics artists publishing their work without censorship, without fear, and without shame. I admit: if these guys weren't all that talented, this would not be that big of a deal. But wow, they sure as hell are. Talented. And things are big. Ahem.

It was a privilege to publish *The Passion of Gengoroh Tagame* in 2013 with Anne Ishii, Graham Kolbeins, and Dan Nadel, but even then we knew there was much more to the story of gay erotic manga that was not *yaoi*. And to their credit, Anne and Graham pursued the other artists who create it to compile this book.

And so we have:

First, more of the divine **Tagame**, in the initial part of a story that is as political as it is erotically charged, about extreme power play involving Japanese POWs in an American-controlled war camp. Never mind that the main protagonist, Tsubaki Kiyotaka, looks about as Japanese as Burt Reynolds in *Deliverance*—I suppose that's part of the whole damned point. Tagame proves himself again to be a genius at his craft, the true trail-blazer for the rest of these creators.

Inu Yoshi's chronicle of recently-dumped Masami and his "unwanted" humanoid helper Kandagawa, which pokes fun at the idea of techno-sex.

Kumada Poohsuke, who combines a four-panel comic strip format with musings on seduction gone out of control, and foot worship.

Takeshi Matsu, who cleverly and very sexily examines how anatomical drawings relate to their real-world subjects.

Jiraiya's unforgettable Caveman Guu, who keeps trying to make babies with other cavemen (ha!), to no avail (duh). So he rides a giant cave bear named Kuu (I would do exactly the same thing in his situation, just saying). This guy is amazing.

Gai Mizuki's story about Mr. Ota, who is trying to learn, among other things, how to jump rope (blush).

Fumi Miyabi's historical depiction of a Tengu, an annoying magical spirit in human form who really, really needs to be taught a lesson.

Seizoh Ebisubashi's insanely hot depiction of Mr. Tokugawa, a fifth grade teacher who is so horny that he just can't help himself from doing all sorts of naughty, naughty things with the school's janitor and a particularly beefy member of the PTA.

And **Kazuhide Ichikawa**'s tale of Yakuza dons who are hypnotized by their doctor to penetrate each other, seemingly against their will (yeah, right).

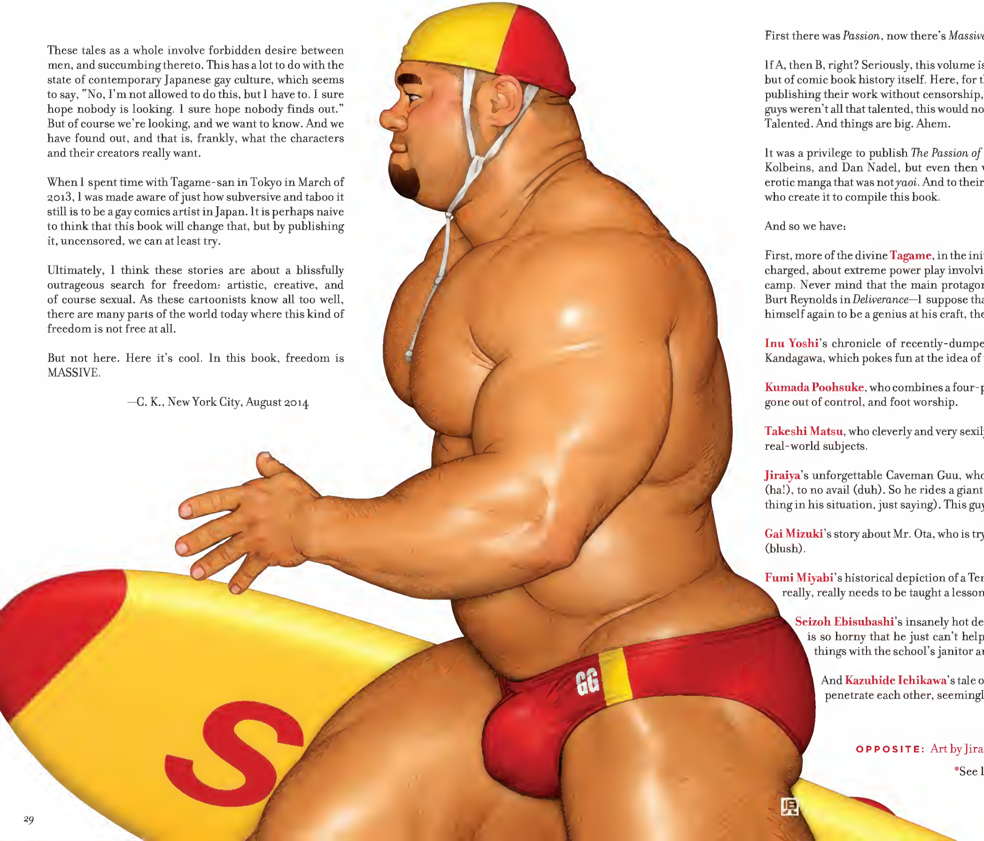
These tales as a whole involve forbidden desire between men, and succumbing thereto. This has a lot to do with the state of contemporary Japanese gay culture, which seems to say, "No, I'm not allowed to do this, but I have to. I sure hope nobody is looking. I sure hope nobody finds out." But of course we're looking, and we want to know. And we have found out, and that is, frankly, what the characters and their creators really want.

When I spent time with Tagame-san in Tokyo in March of 2013, I was made aware of just how subversive and taboo it still is to be a gay comics artist in Japan. It is perhaps naive to think that this book will change that, but by publishing it, uncensored, we can at least try.

Ultimately, I think these stories are about a blissfully outrageous search for freedom: artistic, creative, and of course sexual. As these cartoonists know all too well, there are many parts of the world today where this kind of freedom is not free at all.

But not here. Here it's cool. In this book, freedom is MASSIVE.

—C. K., New York City, August 2014



OPPOSITE: Art by Jiraiya for GG Group. Japanese beefcake to the rescue!

*See Ichikawa's Yakuza story on page 255 of this volume.

英語翻訳家募集中

SEEKING ENGLISH TRANSLATOR

BY ANNE ISHII

Many of the readers coming to this book will have found the first crumbs leading to our pie years ago at websites that host scanlations and other forms of pirated manga. The road we as editors took to get here was itself paved in part by the purveyors of these illicit goods—not because we were downloading illegal scanlations, but because the presence of those sites was proof that thousands of manga fans were desperate for legitimation. Across the board(s), we'd see the same rationalizations come up repeatedly in conversations about unsanctioned translations:

"It doesn't hurt anyone because it's out of print."
"It's never going to be published in English."

The problem isn't just when this isn't true. It's the fact that not telling someone you like their stuff enough to spend hours translating and publicizing the work is just weird. It's a little bit stalker-like. But more on that in a second.

I am not here to condone or condemn publishing piracy. I am 100 percent behind the idea of availing oneself of international creative commons, and I'm well aware of the greater good signified by free public tools for creating and adapting art, but I am also made painfully aware of how original content creators are exploited, every friggin' day. I wish someone (*cough* Marvel Comics *cough*) would create a Scrooge McDuck-style dipping pool of gold coins for all those writers, illustrators, inkers, and Tumblr maestros: artists stuck in the conundrum of "doing what you love" despite financial insecurity.

But manga fans have developed a codependent relationship with black market Japanese content, for better or worse. To that end, I'm hoping this book will serve a second purpose[1]: by getting published by the best comics publisher in the country (Fantagraphics), we prove that there's an organic way to produce translations of gay manga—all manga, even—that will give this hard-core underground community legitimacy, and in so doing, we will prove weird that content doesn't need to equal weird publishing practices.

So now, I am going to draw out the very circumstances of *Massive*'s publication and suggest this as a template for future manga translations. Feel free to use this template for your own gay manga anthology.

1) We worked closely with Gengoroh Tagame, who personally brokered introductions to many of the featured artists. Tagame's name will appear regularly in the book. This isn't just idle praise for the master, or commercial promotion for his other works (which you can find for a great price at massive-goods.com!). Tagame is the Dr. Who of gay comics. He represents a bygone golden age of magazine publishing but also the reason and the mechanisms by which the publishing industry evolved and will continue to evolve. He is a historian and bellwether for the queer community in Tokyo and abroad—a rare specimen who is at once very aware of his role in the ecosystem and beholden to its health. Tagame is crucial to understanding gay manga in Japan. None of the work sampled herein, the careers of the artists who created them, nor the research that went into contextualizing this world would have been possible without him. So to understand gay manga is to know and understand his work and career. This *is* the golden age of gay manga enlightenment, and he is the Holy Shakyamuni. Step 1: Get as much time in with the master as possible.

2) As we've said elsewhere, most of the artists in this book have not officially been translated into English before. Finding them was a matter of good old-fashioned research, on top of the generous guidance of Tagame-san, as mentioned. This is research we conducted on multiple trips abroad, through word of mouth, and through deep dives into the farthest corners of the blogosphere, where Japanese artist sites exist in almost incomprehensible user interface. In between research expeditions, we had endless conversations with Japanese language specialists

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[1] The first purpose of this book, I hope, is obvious: the awesome information and dope comics contained within it.

on how to transliterate sound effects and subscripts, on the best translations for "*hattenba*." In that sense, what you're holding is a structural relic of publishing, based on content discovered and developed organically. Step 2: Do the hard work. It wouldn't be good if it weren't hard (eyebrow dance).

3) My use of the word "organic" should absolutely be interpreted as an allusion to the farming industrial complex. Like organic food, organic comics tend to be more nourishing, if a bit more expensive. The concept can also lead to internecine debate among liberal arts majors and bourgeois Park Slope yuppies who can't possibly understand the circumstances of the working class who need their comics to be affordable. Organic is good. Available is better.

If it were up to us, we'd publish a free encyclopedia of queer comics artists and not simply a one-volume introduction to gay manga. That option still exists, but it's important to know who it's for and who it benefits. Making accessible organic content means that, to some extent, you have to be educated in the rules and the politics of the marketplace. Step 3: Make sure the message and the messenger are compatible.

4) We did this book in spite of the scanlation world, so the chapters are focused on the artists, not just language/jargon, particular series, thematics, or licensed properties. The men who make these comics are real people. Many of the artists depend on the income from their self-published works, though admittedly others don't. But even if not one of the artists stood to profit from his work, the idea that an Anglophone reader would scanlate or reblog without letting the artist participate is just plain weird.

Again, this isn't so much a judgment against scanlators, since their intentions are not malicious. I'm appealing to you efficient citizens of the Internet who insist on otherwise very particular publishing decorum to give the artists you're translating a chance to work with you. Translators love talking to each other on forums about syntax and style, but here's the thing: manga artists love it too! Talking to them is incredibly enriching, and most importantly, super easy! Step 4: Don't be weird. If you're working with an artist, let them know!

5) For years, Chip Kidd, Graham Kolbeins, and I waited for a real publisher to translate and package this manga. I was almost certain that with the preponderance of goods from the *yaoi*/ boys' love camp that a gay manga discourse was inevitable. Over the years that we waited, we saw a lot of mention on blogs and torrent sites of the genre, then misattributed as "*bara*"—long story... read about it in our book. But it finally hit us. *We* were the ones who had to publish this. The book was not being made because we weren't making it. We needed to find a publisher. We needed to contact the artists. We needed to create the cultural exchange. So it began with a series of short introductory emails, and the rest is history. Step 5: If you hear yourself saying "It's not going to get published," or "It's out of print," this is all the more reason for you to work on a real publication.

In conclusion, let me say: the artists are almost all publicly available. If not through direct email addresses or contact forms on their sites, then Twitter. And most are very willing to chat. People may shy from outreach because the artists seem intimidating, their language seems intimidating, or maybe just talking to strangers is intimidating. Well, I can only reiterate that most artists welcome discourse with English-speaking readers—are waiting with bated breath to meet you, even. Don't be weird; don't be scared. Write to us, write to an editor, write to an artist, and never forget to write to your mother!

Here's a basic template for a message to an artist.

Dear (Artist),
I am a huge fan of your work. I would like to help you promote (name of work) by translating it for you. If you like it, you can post it on your site, and I'll help you make it available for others to see.
Humbly,
(Signature)

Don't get me wrong: this isn't a fool-proof pickup line. We got a couple "no thank you"s in response to our first outreach. But I promise, it's worth it to ask. It's how we make friends, and it should be how we make books.

GLOCALIZING *GEI* MANGA

BY GRAHAM KOLBEINS

Japanese gay magazines have been in the business of publishing manga for more than three decades. Since the mid-1990s, there has been a major influx of both standalone book-length collections and *doujinshi* (self-published comics) created by gay men. The industry for gay comics in Japan is perhaps the most robust in the world—thanks in large part to a handful of publications including *G-men*, *Badi*, and *Samson*, which consistently commission dozens of pages of original work in each issue. The genre's influence extends far beyond the printed page, as illustrations by gay *mangaka* adorn everything from club flyers, condoms, and sexual health awareness literature to hand fans, T-shirts and, recently, a billboard in Tokyo's gay neighborhood, Shinjuku Ni-chome.

Massive focuses on homoerotic manga made by gay men, but even within that broad category, this volume is by no means comprehensive. Thousands of works have been drawn by hundreds of artists, so rather than attempting to encompass a complete history of that highly heterogeneous terrain, we've chosen to profile nine of the most influential gay *mangaka* making work today. As the title suggests, the work in *Massive* represents a popular trend within gay manga of depicting larger-bodied, masculine male figures—but each artist in this collection lays claim to a vision of male-male sexuality all his own. Their work has helped shape the aesthetic of contemporary Japanese gay culture and provides crucial representations of gay life to readers in Japan and abroad. *Massive* is a gesture of our appreciation, an opportunity for readers to get to know the men behind the manga, and an investigation into the things that make gay manga such an exceptional, vital form.

What *Massive* isn't is a complete overview of the spectrum of queerness represented in Japanese manga. More attention must be paid to lesbian manga, called girls' love or *yuri* (lily), which in the last decade has undergone a renaissance. The impressive amount of manga that explores gender identity through *futanari* (hermaphrodite) and *newhalf* (transgender) characters surely warrants its own compendium. *Kemono* (beast) is an anthropomorphic erotic category paralleling furry culture and boasting its own dedicated *doujinshi* circles and festivals.

You may be familiar with another, far more popular type of manga devoted to male-male romance: *shonen-ai* (boys' love/BL)—or *yaoi*, for the sexually explicit variety—manga created primarily by female artists for a female readership. Flowery, impassioned, and often tragically romantic, BL emerged in the 1970s through the efforts of manga's first major influx of female artists. The women of the Year 24 Group, including Moto Hagio and Keiko Takemiya, were tired of having their own voices marginalized within *shojo* (girls') manga, a genre traditionally dominated by male *mangaka*. Inspired by European cinema and the seminal Japanese gay magazine *Barazoku*, Takemiya employed *shonen-ai* in her renowned manga series, *The Poem of Wind and Trees* (1976-1984) as a tool to liberate women's sexuality.

The heroes of BL are typically slim, effete *bishonen* (beautiful boys)—an archetype that harks back to Edo period male-male sexuality. *Bishonen* can provide female artists and readers with a discursive space to explore feminine sexuality, removed from the patriarchal conventions of heterosexual pornography. In this way, BL can be seen as more of a feminist phenomenon than an expression of real-world gay male identity—but that's not to discount the genre's importance to gay men.

As a high school student in the early 1980s, there were few outlets for a young Gengoroh Tagame to submit his homoerotic manga, so he began his path as an artist drawing *shonen-ai* for breakout BL magazine *June*. Today, Tagame informs us, some of the female *mangaka* he's friends with long to depict the sexuality of "bigger guys" in a "harder" type of erotica than BL's cherry blossom aesthetic allows for—so they take on male pen names and contribute manga to gay magazines. The boundaries between these genres are blurrier than they may appear.

* * *

Where does the story of gay manga begin? It's a question with no simple answer. One easy point of entry is *Barazoku*'s groundbreaking 1986 supplement *Bara-Komi* (Rose Comics). *Bara-Komi* was the first publication to focus exclusively on gay manga, elevating the genre beyond a sidebar in gay magazines. But gay erotic illustrations, sometimes accompanied by text, had been a major part of the Japanese gay press since the first private-circulation magazine, *Adonis*, came out in 1952. Earlier, gay art flourished in the context of *hentai zasshi* (perverse magazines), pansexual smut rags that also published heterosexual, lesbian, and BDSM pornography. Perverse magazines like *Fuzokukitan* fostered the careers of legendary mid-century gay artists like Go Mishima, Sanshi Funayama, and Go Hirano. Through bootleg reproductions, *Fuzokukitan* introduced a queer Japanese audience to the beefcake photography of *Physique Pictorial* and the hypermasculine drawings of Tom of Finland.

It would be an egregious oversight to constrain the story of gay manga to the time frame of the relatively recent sexual identity *gei* (gay) or that of the equally brief history of manga as we know it today. A clear lineage exists between contemporary gay manga and renderings of male-male sexuality common in *shunga* (erotic) woodblock prints of the Edo period (1600-1868). The period's robust print culture also supported an entire genre of literature dedicated to *shudo* (the way of adolescent boys), a path whose followers included samurai, priests, merchants, performers, lords, and peasants.

Centuries before the printing press turned the pursuit of boy love into a populist commodity, it was mainly the purview of Buddhist clergy. Monks in love with their young male disciples are the subject of Japan's oldest surviving work of pornography, a 1321 hand-drawn picture scroll called *Chigo no Soshi* (Acolyte Handbook). This religious tradition of male-male sexuality goes back at least as far as Kukai, the founder of Shignon Buddhism, who was somewhat dubiously credited with "importing" *nanshoku* (male-male love—literally "male colors") from China in the year 806.

We can even reach beyond the bounds of recorded history in search of an origin point, as Ihara Saikaku does in his best-selling *shudo* text, *Nanshoku Okagami* (The Great Mirror of Male Love). This 1687 collection of short stories begins with a beautiful myth from *Nihongi*, Japan's first national history, written in 720: "In the beginning, when gods illuminated the heavens, Kuni-toko-tachi was taught the love of boys by a wagtail bird living on the dry riverbed below the floating bridge of heaven."

My own journey towards gay manga began in 2004 in a northern California high school computer lab. As I surreptitiously perused my LiveJournal feed, I caught my first glimpse of Jiraiya's photorealistic pin-ups. I'll never forget the profound shock and joy of that first encounter. I'd never seen such heavyweight men—illustrated or otherwise—pictured so beautifully. The possibility that these body types could be so casually eroticized on the cover of a magazine (*G-men*, cofounded by Gengoroh Tagame in 1994), opened up worlds of sexual possibility.

Like many international fans of gay manga, I was introduced to the genre through the filter of *bara*, a label born of the Internet, with a complex cross-cultural history. At the tender age of 16, I sought out every JPEG I could find on *bara* blogs and *bara* message boards. Despite the deluge of bootlegged scans, fan-made scanlations, and illustrations available on the Internet, this brilliant artwork mostly existed in a context vortex. Basic information such as who had made the work was fragmented and hard to come by. Finding deeper context, such as the conditions and background of the artwork's creation, proved nearly impossible. It was an expensive challenge trying to order books and magazines from niche Japanese websites, especially for a teenager with no credit card and an elementary grasp of the Japanese language culled from watching *Neon Genesis: Evangelion*. The distance between the artwork I knew as *bara* and a sixteen-year-old me felt like an impassable chasm.

Eight years later, I was pinching myself to make sure I wasn't dreaming on a plane ride across the Pacific Ocean. In Tokyo, I met up with my old bowling buddy, Anne Ishii, to work on *The Passion of Gengoroh Tagame* and conduct the interviews that would form the foundation of *Massive*—originally titled *The Bara Book*. The first night there, we learned what the French artist Fabrissou succinctly explains in the title of his recent gay manga anthology: *Le Bara Ça N'existe Pas*. Seated across from the chain-smoking, surprisingly sweet master of manga himself, we listened intently as Tagame explained the background of *bara* as an antiquated gay pejorative akin to "pansy" and its irrelevance within Japan's current gay nomenclature. It turned out *bara* had been adopted as a genre label by confused heterosexuals reading bootleg scans of early gay manga from *Bara-Komi* on online communities like the popular 2channel. By the time the content was reaching the hands of foreigners as "*bara*," *Barazoku* had long since ceased publication and the Japanese term *bara* had become a vestige of an earlier generation.

Eye-opening experiences came on a daily basis. Witnessing the breadth of gay manga carried at the gay bookstore/sex shop Big Gym felt magical and encouraging. Tucked away on the third floor of a faceless building in Ueno, Big Gym provides a discrete shopping experience for discrete men—but, as Anne discovered on an earlier expedition to the Shinbashi branch of the store, it is far less welcoming to female customers. In Tokyo's gay neighborhood, Shinjuku Ni-chome, the city's longest-running gay bookstore, Lumiere, offers a smaller selection of gay manga but is more inviting to customers of all genders.

Getting to know these nine incredible *mangaka* as people and listening to them share their experiences as artists was an unparalleled privilege. Anne and I spent eight days rushing around meeting the artists in parks, restaurants, and cat cafés. We saw sculptures, paintings, sketches, and endless pages of manga. Kazuhide Ichikawa graciously invited us into his home, where we met Kaz's boyfriend and saw the couple's football helmets. We flew north to Sapporo and photographed the luminary Jiraiya at dusk in a public park, before conversing for hours in our hotel room. That night, Jiraiya took us to his favorite gay bar, a cozy little place with *G-men* and *Badi* on a shelf by the bar and a cute bartender who does drag and flirts all night. Everything we encountered only increased our love for this art form and its artists.

The success of Gengoroh Tagame's manga and the foundation of *G-men* played an important part in the evolution of a masculine performance of gay identity in Japan, contemporaneous with the rise of the "bear" movement in America and Europe in the early 1990s. Coverage of foreign bear culture pops up regularly in early issues of *G-men*—but it would be oversimplifying to conflate the two cultures. Aside from Japan's specific historical precedents of homo-masculinity, the term "bear" implies a certain hairiness more common among Westerners. "I think a bar just for bears would be impossible in Japan; it's like an endangered species here," Jiraiya told us, laughing. "But there are certainly places for bigger guys, yes."

English gay slang has an anthropomorphic taxonomy for these body types—bear, cub, muscle-bear, and otter—and the Japanese gay lexicon allows for just as much specificity. The bodies portrayed in *Massive* can be classified as *gacchiri* (muscular), *gachimuchi* (muscle-curvy), *gachidebu* (muscle-chub), and *debu* (fat). These classifications of beefiness can be found everywhere from the titles of club nights (*Gachimuchi* Disco) to the websites of sex clubs like GG Group, which advertises itself as a *gachimuchi* "relaxation salon," to profiles on gay smartphone apps like 9Monsters, which, it should be noted, introduces its own barnyard of animal metaphors for gay men's bodies, including bison, deer, pig, and monkey.

The language of sexuality is in constant flux, especially in intercultural contexts. After its adoption by Western Internet circles, the term *bara* has, in English, morphed beyond a straightforward label for Japanese gay art to encompass a broad range of images depicting "manly stuff," as one message board describes it. All kinds of 2D erotica can be classified *bara*, from bathroom mirror bear selfies to video game fan art. All of these sexy yet distinct media are flattened within *bara*, which signifies a masculine eroticism in its English usage that couldn't be further from its origin point in Japanese as a homophobic slur that likened gay men to pretty, thorny flowers.

Likewise, the word *gei* (gay) has had a unique trajectory in Japan. During the US occupation, American soldiers introduced the term to the Japanese lexicon, referring to the Japanese men they had sex with as "gay boys." "Gay" had only recently emerged as standardized slang within the multinational homosocial environments of the Allied Forces—but it would take another two decades before the word became widely used in American discourse. In contrast, Japanese mass media picked up on the term almost immediately after the war. In the 1950s, *gei boi* was used to describe gay men who wore women's clothing and worked as entertainers in gay bars, much like the *onnagata* (male kabuki actors who performed female roles) of a bygone era. *Gei* became a distinctly Japanese sexual category—a term with transgender and performance connotations that diverged from the gender-neutral *doseiai* (same-sex love) and from *homo*, the preferred label amongst gender-conforming gay men. *Barazoku* marked itself as a *homo* magazine, not *gei*.

New!
New!
New!
New!
Porno Theater
THE BIGGEST TEACHER
NODA ガク
GG
SUPER SM-Z
SUPER SM-Z
新作
新作
新作
その男
おねだり わんわん おしおき

Gay magazines, manga, and doujinshi *on display at the Ueno branch of Big Gym*

Gei began to realign with its Western referent in the 1980s. The AIDS crisis globalized certain forms of American gay activism, while a "gay boom" in Japanese pop culture brought the works of gay-identified artists like Edmund White and Robert Mapplethorpe into the national dialogue. Groups like the Japanese International Lesbian and Gay Association (JILGA) began to refashion Japanese sexual labels into a Western mold. The use of *gei* as an identity for all homosexual men was advocated by the young Japanese activists who spun off from the JILGA to create the homegrown group OCCUR. In 1991, OCCUR brought a lawsuit against the Japanese governments over the rights of homosexuals for the first time. They protested a major Japanese dictionary that defined "homosexuality" as an "abnormal sexual desire," and their widely dispersed handouts featured a glossary recommending the use of *gei* over older terms like *homo* and the common slur *okama*.

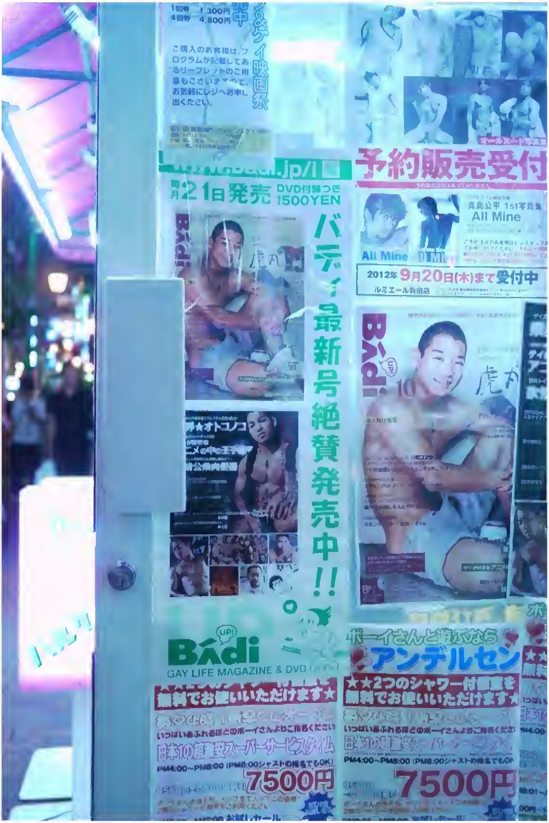
So, *gei* had taken on a newly political dimension for homosexual men by the time *G-men* and *Badi* debuted in 1994. The comics that fill their pages are *gei* manga. Language will continue to evolve, and "gay manga" is by no means a stable category, but for now it feels like the appropriate way to talk about the work in this book—sequential art made by Japanese men in the time of AIDS and the Internet.

When we began this project, gay manga was well-loved in the English-speaking world by a small, devoted niche—yet widely unknown in a broader cultural sense. In the two years since, the reputation and accessibility of this great artwork has vastly improved. PictureBox released our first anthology, *The Passion of Gengoroh Tagame*, and the master of gay manga made his initial public appearances in North America, alongside Chip Kidd, at the Toronto Comic Arts Festival and The Standard Hotel in New York. The German publishing house Bruno Gmünder Verlag has released three more English-language translations, done by Anne Ishii, of Gengoroh Tagame's manga, as well as works by Takeshi Matsu and Mentaiko.

Anne and I created a line of gay manga–inspired goods and imports we call MASSIVE. We've already had the pleasure of bringing gay manga to a wide variety of contexts including the leather street fair Folsom East, San Diego Comic-Con (thanks to the great LGBT arts nonprofit Prism Comics), the alternative comics festival CAKE in Chicago, and Bent-Con, a queer comics festival. The Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles provided the space for a gay manga/fine art intervention at this year's LA Art Book Fair. And earlier this year, MASSIVE had the privilege of collaborating with esteemed fashion brand Opening Ceremony to produce an entire Jiraiya-themed collection, which ended up being featured in the Style Section of the *New York Times*. People are starting to take notice.

I hope this book fans the flames of worldwide interest in gay manga. It is my sincere wish that *Massive* inspires more translation, more respect for the artists within their own country and abroad, more cross-cultural understanding, and so many more orgasms.

Enjoy!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バディ最新号絶賛発売中!!
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2012年9月20日(木)まで受付中
ルミエール新宿店
Badi
GAY LIFE MAGAZINE & DVD
ボーイさんと遊ぶならアンデルセン
無料でお使いいただけます★
7500円
7500円

Badi *magazine on the front door of gay bookstore Lumiere, in Shinjuku Ni-chome*

Gengoroh Tagame
田亀源五郎

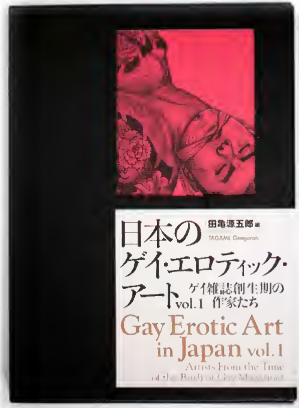
Gengoroh Tagame, the legendary gay erotic artist whose expert draftmanship and dark BDSM fantasies have captured the imaginations of a worldwide audience, is without a doubt the individual most directly responsible for the success of gay manga. His first standalone manga collection, *Naburi Mono* (The Toyed Man), published in 1992, proved that gay content could be profitable in the commercial manga marketplace. Not long after, he co-founded *G-men* magazine, which has served as an incubator for up-and-coming gay *mangaka*. Tagame's artwork has been exhibited around the globe, and his epic tales of muscled, mustachioed masochists (and so many sadists) have been translated into French, Spanish, Italian, and English.

Tagame is deeply concerned with the historical. He's centrally responsible for preserving the history of Japanese gay artwork from the generations that precede his own. Tagame was a high school student when he first came across gay images from the old *hentai zasshi* (perverse magazines), collected in *Renaissance* magazine. Looking at this "disposable" homoerotic artwork—once sold in vending machines—the artist knew he had found his calling.

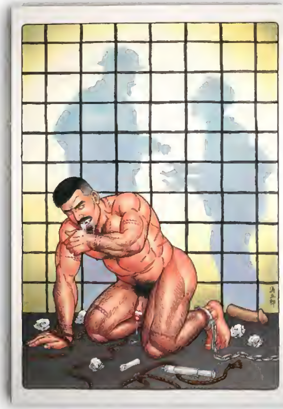
"Later, as an adult, I found out from collectors that there's a long history of this kind of work. I was totally shocked and astonished, just how impressive the work was. I got really concerned that this history might be lost forever if we didn't start collecting it now. That's what inspired me to write *Gay Erotic Art in Japan*," he says.

His invaluable series of art history books offers not only a thoughtful historiography, but thoughtful discourse on the nature of erotic art itself. "Gay erotic art," Tagame asserts in the introduction to *Gay Erotic Art in Japan* Volume 1, "illustrates the beauty of men or the sexual charms of men according to the artists' perceptions and skills." This deceptively simple definition acknowledges the blurry boundaries of sexuality by not restricting gay art to gay authorship. "There have been examples of pieces by heterosexual male or female artists being featured in gay magazines and becoming popular with gay readers," he writes. "So, in some cases, the pieces function and serve as gay erotic art regardless of the artists' own sexuality."

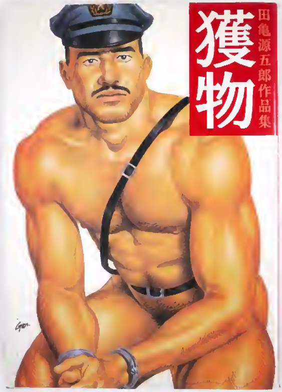
Tagame understands this principle from formative firsthand experiences. Still in high school, Tagame's first homoerotic manga was published in *June*, a *shonen-ai* (boys' love) magazine written primarily by female *mangaka* for a female audience. While gay magazines were just starting to dabble in manga, by the late 1970s BL had exploded in popularity, driven by the mass appeal of works like *The Poem of Wind and Trees* by Keiko Takemiya. *June* was the first magazine to capitalize on the phenomenon and focus primarily on BL.



Gay Erotic Art in Japan Volume 1 (2003)



Shirogane no Hana (1994–1999, collected 2001)



Emono (1998)

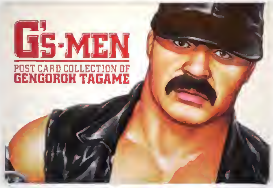
Today, it's the artists of the BL community who are crossing over into the alien territory of gay magazines. Certain female artists eschew the *bishonen* boys of *yaoi* dreams. "Some of these women don't personally prefer that type," Tagame tells us. "They want to draw bigger guys. So they do these personal projects, and since the BL magazines won't publish them, they come to us. I suppose most of them are writing under male pen names, though. There are a couple women who publish under their own names. Some people have problems with this, like 'BL is inherently anti-male.' Since it's inclusive of females, it must be exclusive against males. Others say that the nature of BL is inherently not feminist. I'm not a politically correct person to begin with, and I find all of this sort of ludicrous. I think regardless of gender, it's what you want to read, it's what you get out of it that's important. Men write porn for women all the time, so I think it's fine."

In the mid-1980s, when women-authored gay love stories were de rigeur, the first serious attempt by a gay magazine to publish manga by gay men came in the form of *Barazoku*'s supplement *Bara-Komi*. "There were comics in it with very poor plot devices—not very good storytelling," Tagame recalls, "but people wanted more of it. There just weren't enough people writing in that genre or that format. I can actually tell you right now that I have college-era stuff in there myself."

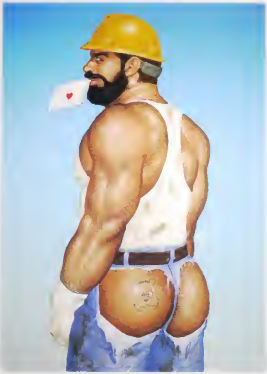
The title of *Bara-Komi* raises an important linguistic sticking point for Tagame: the widespread misuse of the term "*bara*." Literally "rose," *bara* is an antiquated slur for gay men. It took on a new layer of meaning in the 1960s as the title of the private circulation gay publication *Bara*, and the subsequent mass-market magazine *Barazoku* (Rose Tribe). "It was very shocking and sensational to publish something in the jargon of the hetero nomenclature for gays," says Tagame. "It's exactly like the word 'pansy' in English. Whereas gays probably don't call each other 'pansies,' since it's not necessarily a good thing, to reappropriate it was a big deal. But by the time I was getting bigger as an artist, that word was almost obsolete, and we no longer use it. It was important for us to call ourselves 'gays' and 'homosexual' rather than '*bara*,' which is just what hetero people call us."

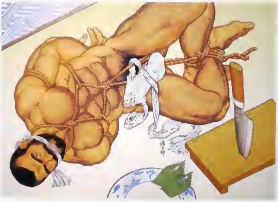
"Gay" became the primary identity label for homosexual men as a more internationalized concept of LGBT identity gained political and social ground in Japan. "By the 1990s," Tagame remembers, *bara* "was totally obsolete, *Barazoku* magazine was becoming obsolete, and the whole nomenclature was about to completely expire. But in the early stages of the Internet, when people were on all these Internet boards, basically, the people running these forums were straight, so they called the gay board the '*bara*' board.

"Of course, the Internet is how foreigners discovered our work. They saw that this whole section was called '*bara*,' so that's how I believe foreigners started to use and appropriate that word. The word has come back to life, unfortunately, and I have to say personally, I'm sort of against it. I don't call my own work '*bara*' and I don't like it being called '*bara*' because it's a very negative word that comes with bad connotations."



G's-Men, postcards of Tagame's *G-men* cover illustrations (1998)





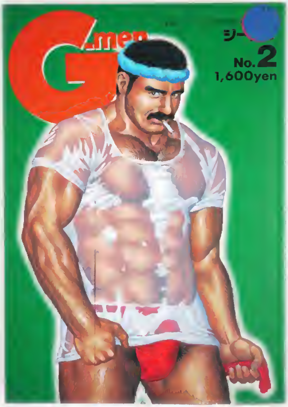
Back in the *Bara-Komi* days of yore, the artist known as Gengoroh Tagame was using a different (undisclosed) pen name, until his debut in *Sabu*, where he came up with his current pen name. "That's where I started writing novels and manga, around '87 or '88," he remembers. *Sabu* was the all-purpose gay magazine that provided Tagame with a springboard into his career and kept him busy with steady employment as a *mangaka*. Tagame wrote twenty stories for *Sabu* in the span of five years, including the three-hundred-page serial *Naburi Mono* (The Toyed Man), which became a successful standalone book—the first for a gay manga artist.

The rest is history. Gengoroh Tagame would go on to publish dozens of books and help launch *G-men* ("G" as in Gengoroh), a magazine which had an impact on the careers of everyone else in this volume—Jiraiya in particular. Tagame's covers, from issue #1 to issue #62, can be thought of as *G-men*'s first era, followed by the era of Jiraiya from issue #63 to issue #124 (2001–2006). "This might be forward of me to say," Tagame modestly qualifies, "but I can definitely see that people have been influenced by me, and others have been influenced by Jiraiya. I have noticed our mutual effect on the younger generations of artists."

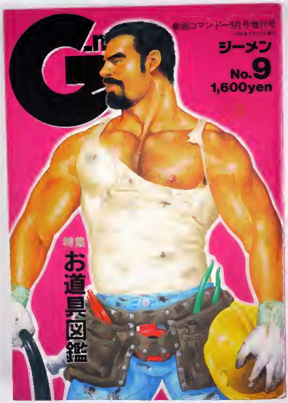
While most of the artists profiled in this book are veterans of their craft, having made manga since the '80s and '90s, a younger generation of gay Japanese artists could easily fill volumes of its own. Artists who came up online and are primarily self-publishing their work in *doujinshi* circles, like Terujirou, Okura, SUV, Kenta, and Uron, have taken gay artwork in exciting new directions, but it's easy to see the long-term impact Tagame and Jiraiya's work has had on the genre.

"I'd self-publish if I had the time, but I'm so busy with my own work. Maybe if I have some time next year I'll try it." In the time since this interview, Tagame has yet to endeavor to publish his own *doujinshi*, but he has contributed to other artists' self-published projects. "When I was a teenager, the pros were in magazines and the amateurs self-published. That was the way it was. So in that sense, magazines were viewed as the top. Now, I would say it's equal, and the difference is that you either want to be in a magazine, or you want to be self-published. Of course, with magazines, you have to answer to editors. For some people these days, it makes more sense to do *doujinshi* because you don't have to answer to anybody." Tagame thrives on the creative structure provided by the fee-based publishing: "I'll do whatever I need to make a print deadline."

"The position of magazines has dropped," he acknowledges. "It's not as interesting to people to be in magazines anymore, and they're just not doing as well. Self-publishing has gotten so good that you can actually publish something much better-looking than what's in stores. When I was a teenager, self-publishing meant stuff that came out wrong, like the lines were cut and the glue didn't stay, or stuff would fall apart—these days you can actually get pretty good quality books."



G-men #2 (1995)



G-men #9 (1996)

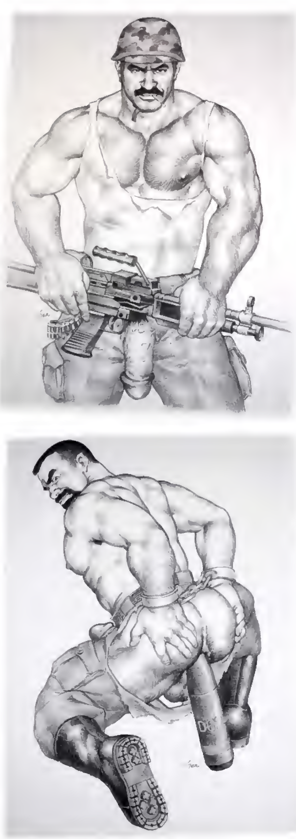
Internet killed the magazine star. Digital piracy came swiftly to gay manga, and bootleg scanlations hosted on file-sharing services offered Tagame's manga for free through *bara* boards around the world. "As far as scanlations and pirated content—obviously I don't approve. People have told me it represents a quantity of fans, and it means that people are reading it—that you should be glad. But I think that's a really poor excuse. If I like something and I want it, I'll pay money to have it. This seems completely obvious to me.

"The other thing I hear is that scanlations can help sales, because it means more people are reading it—that's absolutely not the case. It's increased traffic to my website, like tenfold, and since taking off, my site traffic has gone up incredibly, but my book sales have dropped. So I know for a fact that it's not helping. For example, the Italians, when they first wanted to publish me, they insisted upon original content that hadn't been put in a book yet. They wanted stories that were still in magazines that hadn't been compiled. I basically took that to mean that the reason they didn't want old content was because scanlations of it were permeating the market. When that happens, you lose opportunities for work because people see that there's just no reason to pay you for your content anymore. You lose any sort of guarantee of future work, and it's a negative spiral all the way down to the creator's relationship with their Japanese publisher."

The chilly climate for publishing has prevented Tagame from attempting the type of longer works that flourished in the thriving gay print culture of '90s Japan, like *Shirogane no Hana* (The Silver Flower), an 824-page Meiji period opus that played out in the pages of *Badi* from 1994 to 1999. "I want to do longer works, for sure, but it's incredibly difficult and an unsure environment right now. The magazines have to serialize them and collect them, and frankly speaking, I don't always know how much longer these magazines have, because the state of the industry is so bad. I might have to cut it off before it's completed, so maybe we shouldn't even start."

In spite of this sea change in the Japanese gay art market, Tagame continues to create a high volume of new work every year. He's reaching new readers all the time as more and more of his manga sees publication abroad. Gallery exhibitions in Europe and North America are occuring with greater frequency, and Tagame's work is extending far beyond the vending machine and into the fine art canon.

Tagame's work, both as an artist and a historian of gay art, challenges narrow notions of male sex appeal that ascribe only to "well-balanced male beauty, as in Greek art." He spells out the issue in the text of *Gay Erotic Art in Japan* Volume 1: "Some types of sexuality, such as bear chasers, chubby chasers, senior lovers, have no connection to general models of beauty." Erotic art can problematize popular assumptions about beauty by highlighting the creator's individual desires. It's a radical form of personal expression that takes into account more than just sexual preference, but also the artist's "fetishist-like taste,"



Illustrations from *Bear's D.N.A.* (published in *Barazoku*, 1994–1995)

Tagame mentions. Body parts, objects, and clothing can all contain erotic information. This basic truth also applies to readings of historical art: "For example, considering the above for me, 'a gay who likes machos, facial hair, middle age men, and S&M,' if I am to look for ideal male beauty in ancient sculpture, I will look to the *Farnese Hercules*, not the *Apollo Belvedere*; for an erotic piece I will select *Laocoön*, not *The Capitoline Venus* or the *Sleeping Hermaphrodite*."

Art history contains hidden erotic dimensions. It's not enough to read only the androgynous male beauties of the past as expressions of queerness—we must expand our notions of how different bodies can and have been eroticized for centuries. To limit our interpretations of historical homoeroticism to the type of feminine beauty familiar to a heterosexual audience, Tagame asserts, is to deny the full diversity of male-male sexuality. Luckily, history isn't a closed book. Academics and historians have only just begun to study Gengoroh Tagame's own work, but his prolific output is rife for a deeper investigation. As he churns out his monthly sixteen-plus pages of manga, Tagame regularly reshapes and redefines the realm of possibility.

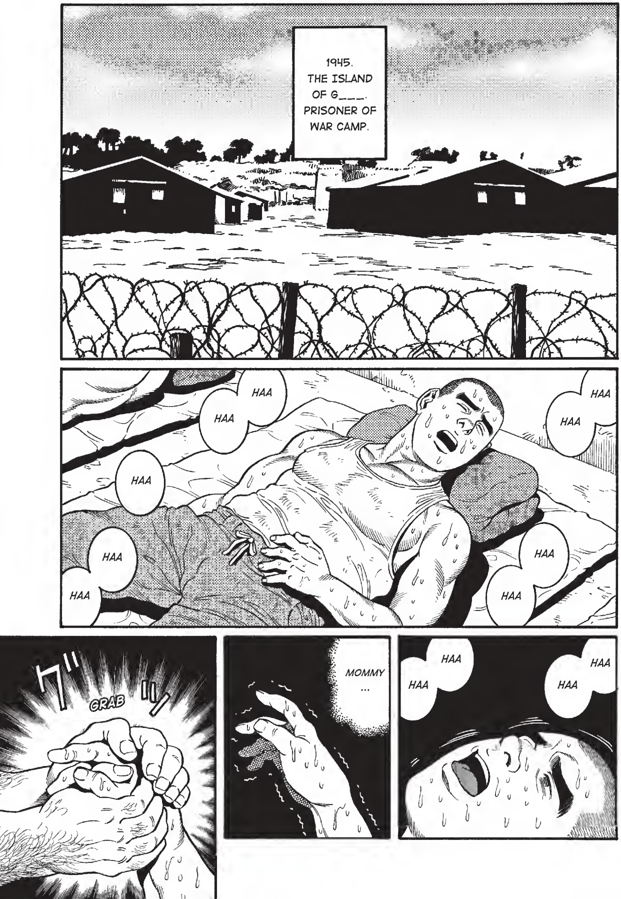
The following manga sample comes from the beginning of Tagame's brilliant six-hundred-page wartime narrative, set during the US occupation of Japan, *Do You Remember South Island P.O.W. Camp?* I'd like to preface the excerpt with a quote from our interview with Tagame addressing what attracts him to themes of militarism:

"What is a military? A military is a group of people who go to war. And what is war? It's insanity. It's about going mad. It's about madness. Murder is a sin, of course—if one of us murders somebody it's a sin. But in war, murder is a virtue. You're supposed to kill everybody. That contradiction just strikes me as very interesting, so the subjects I write about in that setting are the soldiers. Those are the people that live within that contradiction, and it's impossible not to think about that if you're in the military. It's a place where everything is determined by strength and power. And that's incredibly sadomasochistic."

AN EXCERPT FROM

DO YOU REMEMBER SOUTH ISLAND P.O.W. CAMP?

BY GENGOROH TAGAME


1945.
THE ISLAND OF G___.
PRISONER OF WAR CAMP.
HAA
HAA
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HAA
HAA
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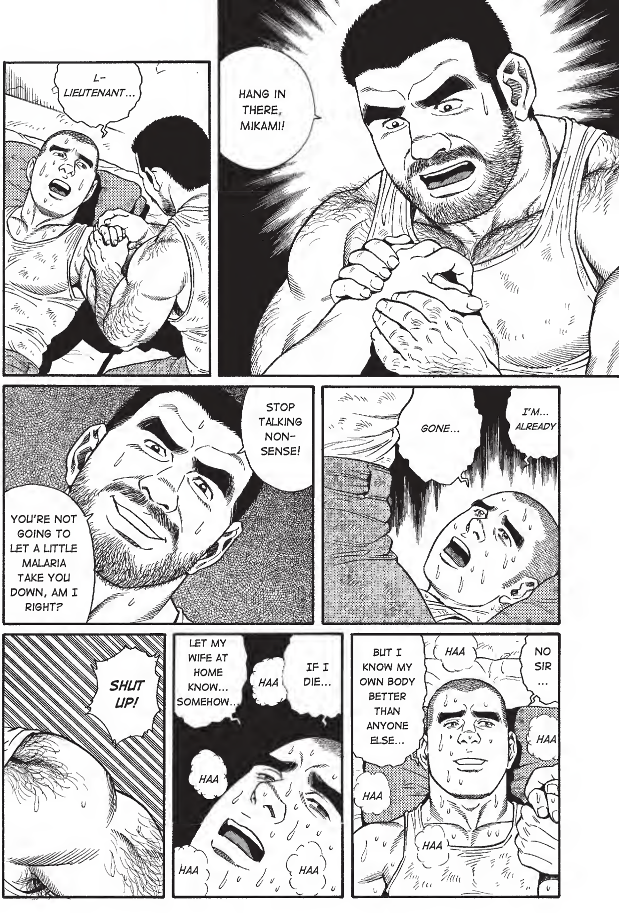
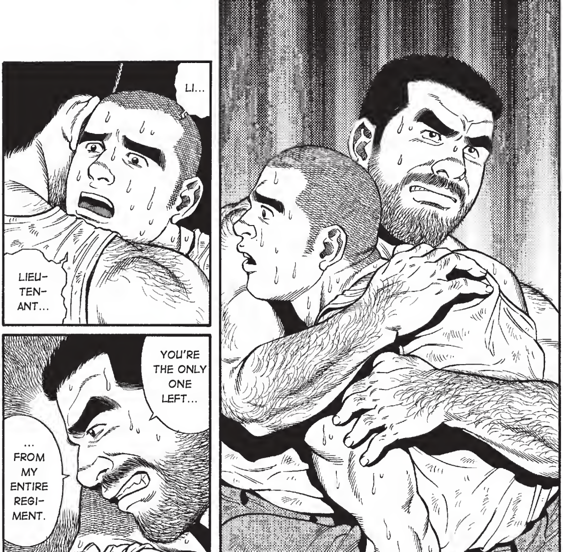
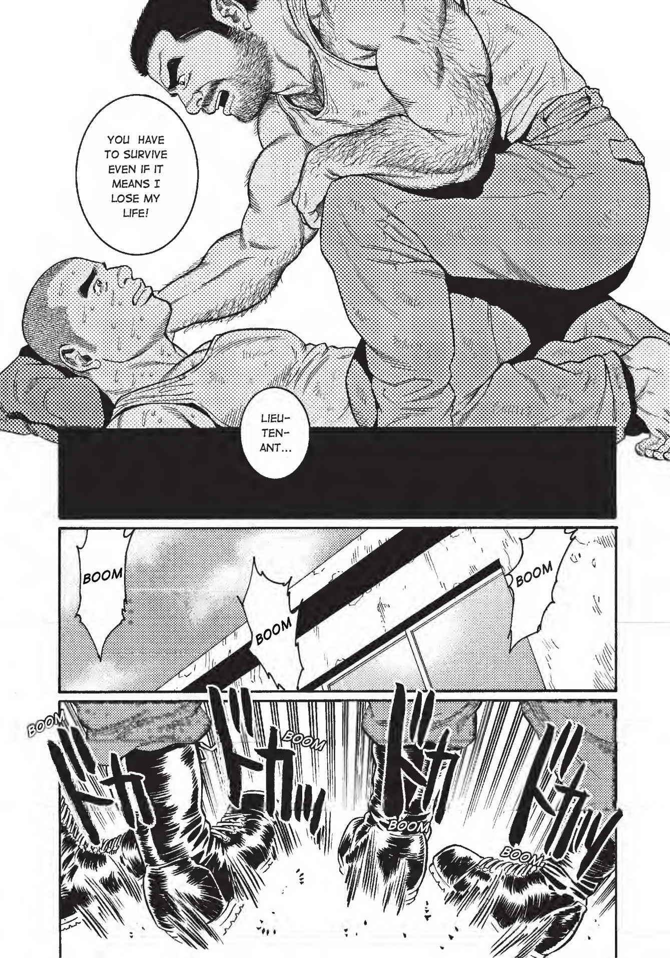
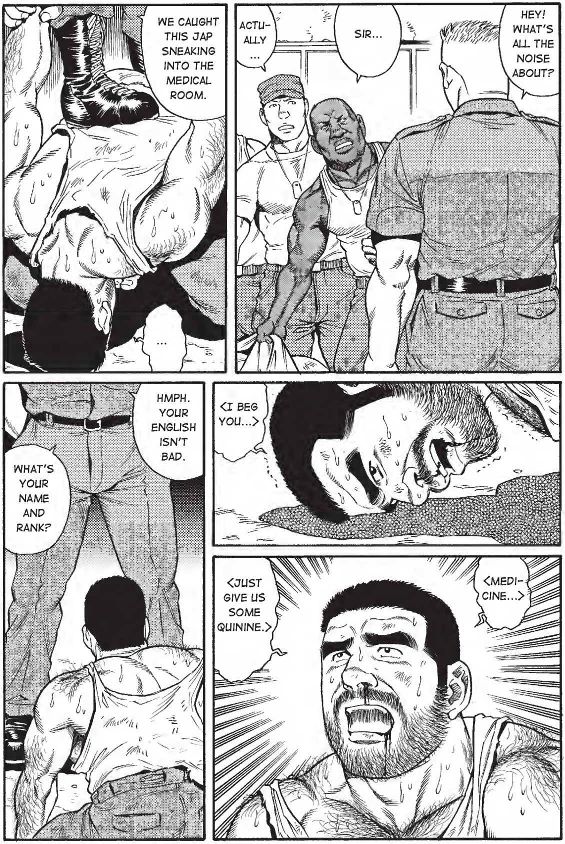
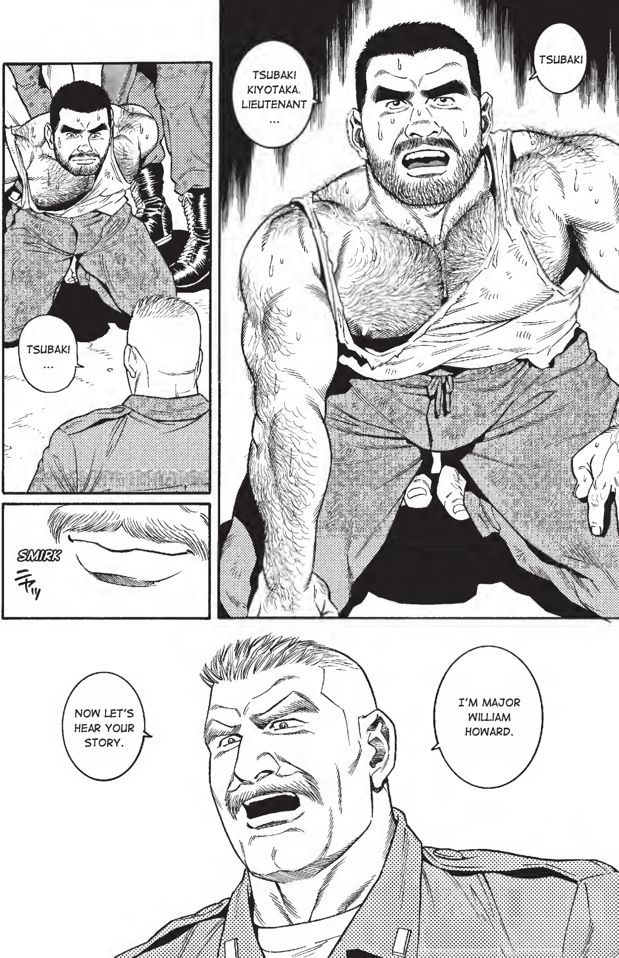
HAA
HAA
HAA
HAA
HAA
HAA
MOMMY ...
グッ
GRAB

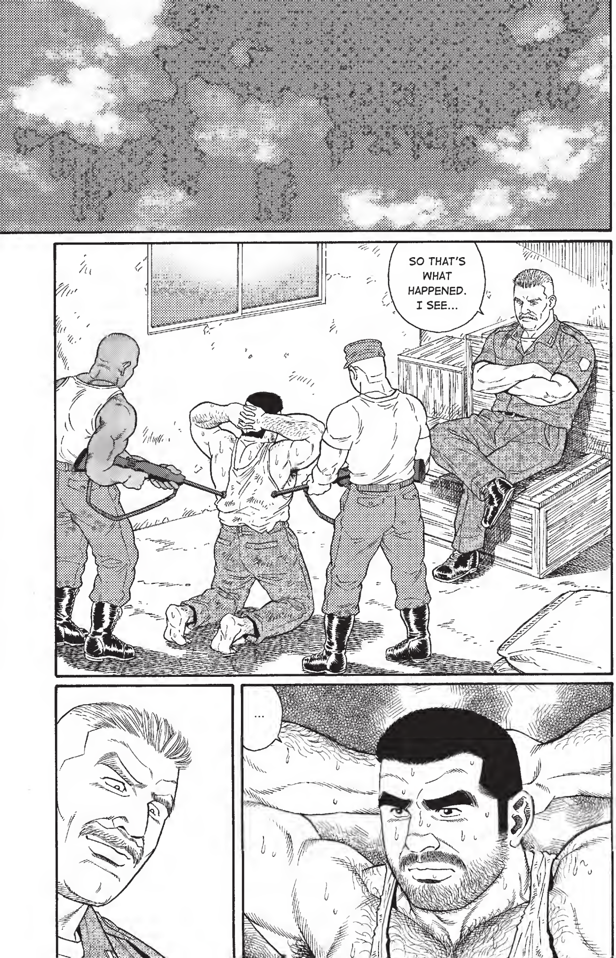

HANG IN THERE, MIKAMI!
L-LIEUTENANT...
I'M... ALREADY
GONE...
STOP TALKING NONSENSE!
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LET A LITTLE MALARIA TAKE YOU DOWN, AM I RIGHT?
NO SIR...
HAA
BUT I KNOW MY OWN BODY BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE...
HAA
HAA
HAA
IF I DIE...
HAA
LET MY WIFE AT HOME KNOW... SOMEHOW...
HAA
HAA
HAA
SHUT UP!

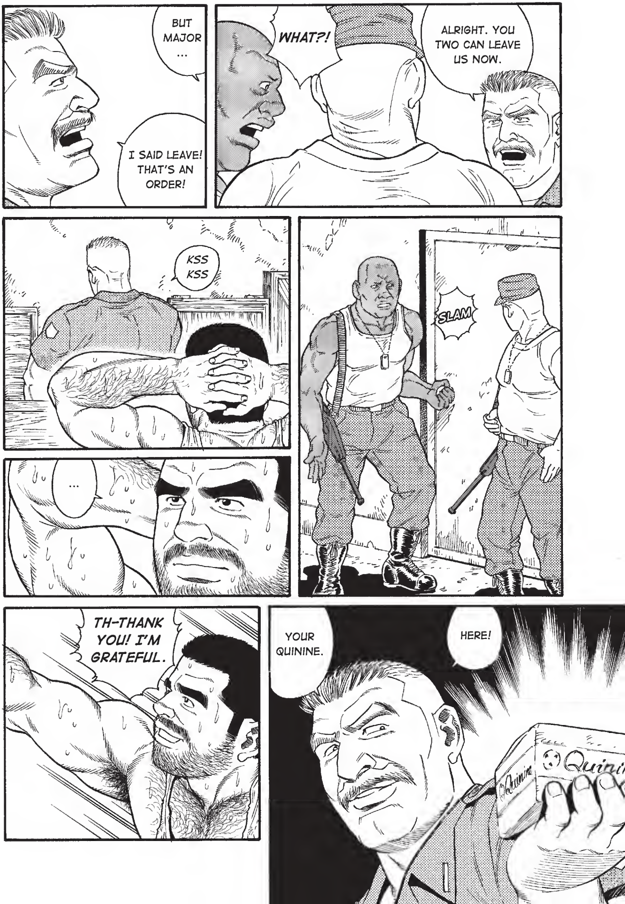

LI...
LIEUTENANT...
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE LEFT...
... FROM MY ENTIRE REGIMENT.
I COULDN'T PROTECT THE OTHER PRIVATES...
I MAY AS WELL HAVE KILLED THEM MYSELF!
SIR... YOU'RE WRONG! LIEUTENANT, YOU WERE...
I'M NOT WRONG ...
THAT'S WHY YOU...
AT LEAST YOU...

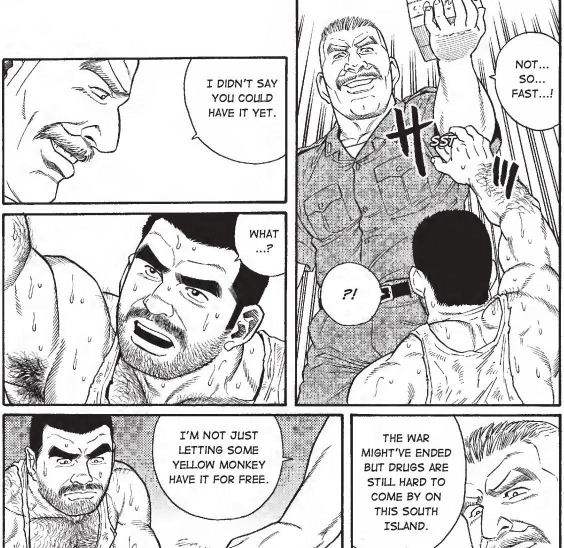

YOU HAVE TO SURVIVE EVEN IF IT MEANS I LOSE MY LIFE!
LIEUTENANT...
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
ドカッ
BOOM
ドカ
BOOM
ドカッ
BOOM
ドカ
BOOM

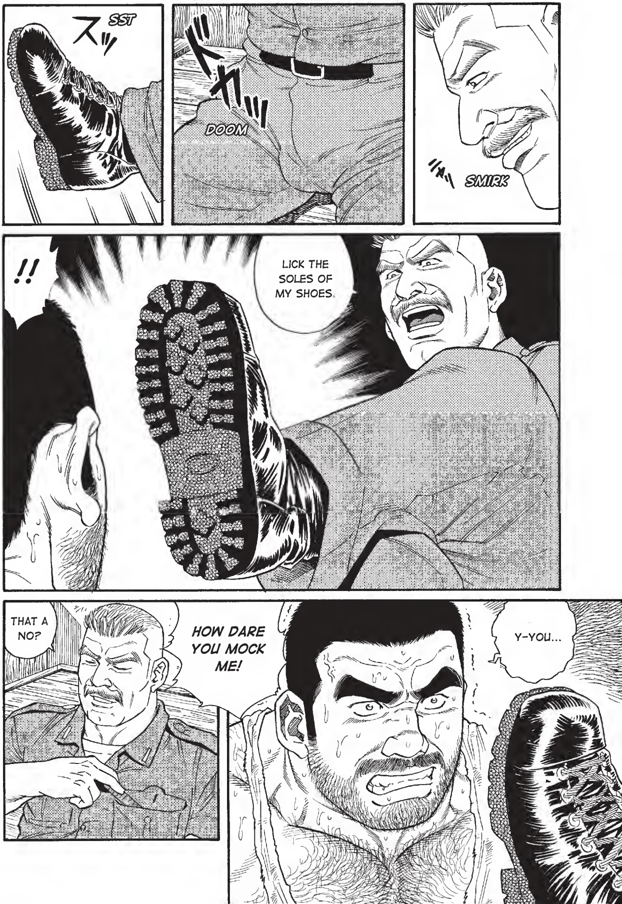

HEY! WHAT'S ALL THE NOISE ABOUT?
SIR...
ACTUALLY...
WE CAUGHT THIS JAP SNEAKING INTO THE MEDICAL ROOM.
...
<I BEG YOU...>
<MEDICINE...>
<JUST GIVE US SOME QUININE.>
HMPH. YOUR ENGLISH ISN'T BAD.
WHAT'S YOUR NAME AND RANK?

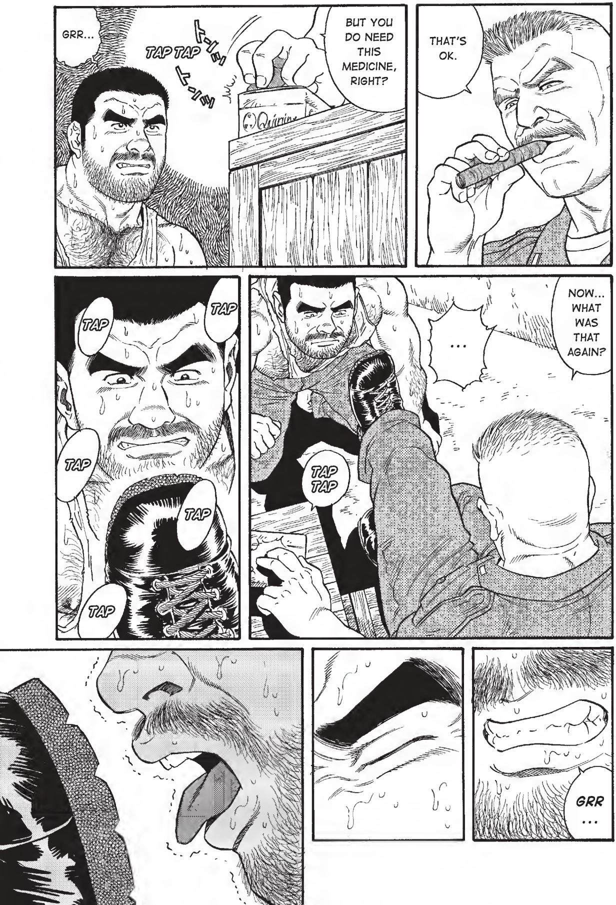

TSUBAKI
TSUBAKI KIYOTAKA. LIEUTENANT ...
TSUBAKI ...
SMIRK
ニヤッ
I'M MAJOR WILLIAM HOWARD.
NOW LET'S HEAR YOUR STORY.

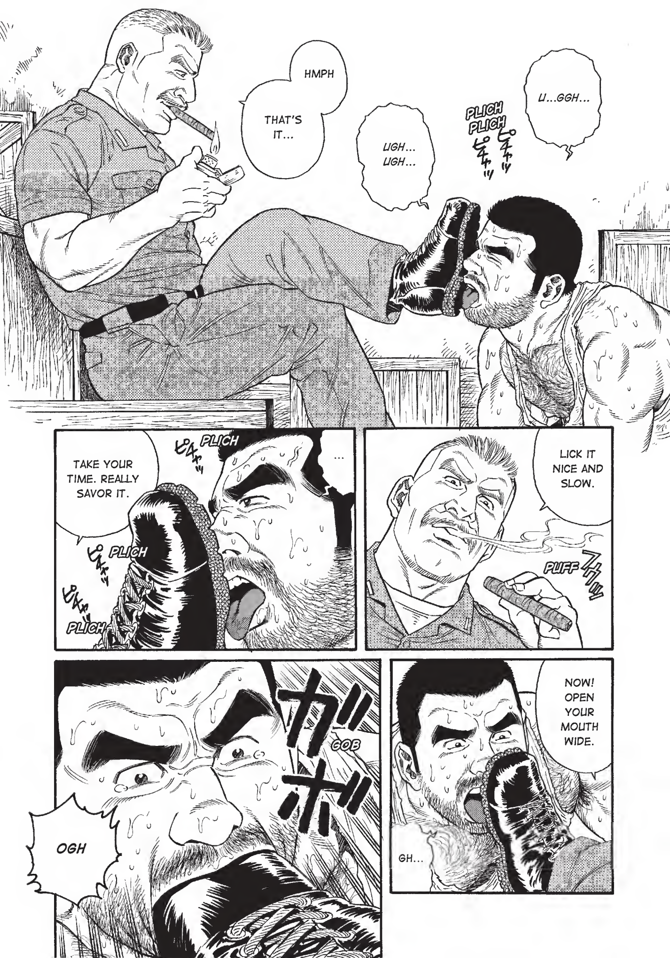

SO THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED. I SEE...
...

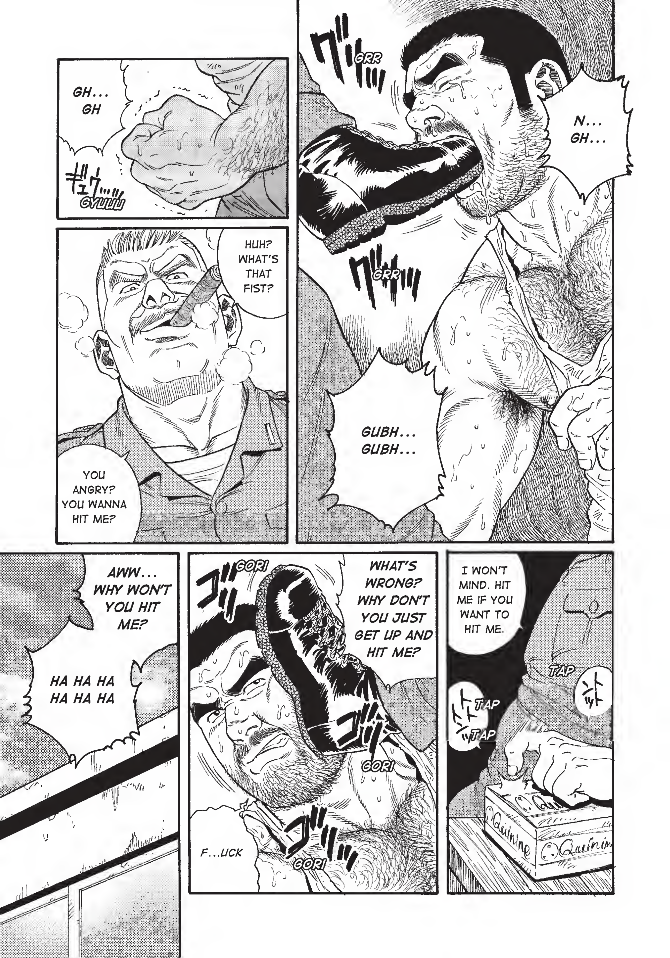

ALRIGHT. YOU TWO CAN LEAVE US NOW.
WHAT?!
BUT MAJOR ...
I SAID LEAVE! THAT'S AN ORDER!
SLAM
KSS KSS
...
HERE!
YOUR QUININE.
Quinine
Quinine
TH-THANK YOU! I'M GRATEFUL.

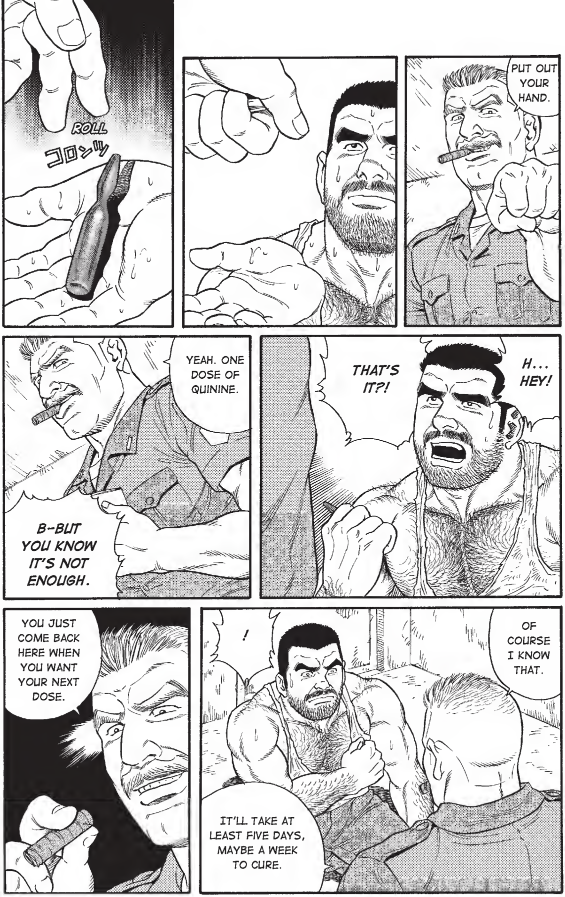

NOT... SO... FAST...!
SST
?!
I DIDN'T SAY YOU COULD HAVE IT YET.
WHAT ...?
THE WAR MIGHT'VE ENDED BUT DRUGS ARE STILL HARD TO COME BY ON THIS SOUTH ISLAND.
TIA
KLANK KLANK
TIAP
Quinine
I'M NOT JUST LETTING SOME YELLOW MONKEY HAVE IT FOR FREE.
...
Quinine
WHAT ARE YOUR TERMS?
I'LL TELL YOU RIGHT NOW, WHEN WE WERE TAKEN IN, WE WERE ALL PICKED CLEAN.
I DON'T HAVE A SINGLE PENNY ON ME.

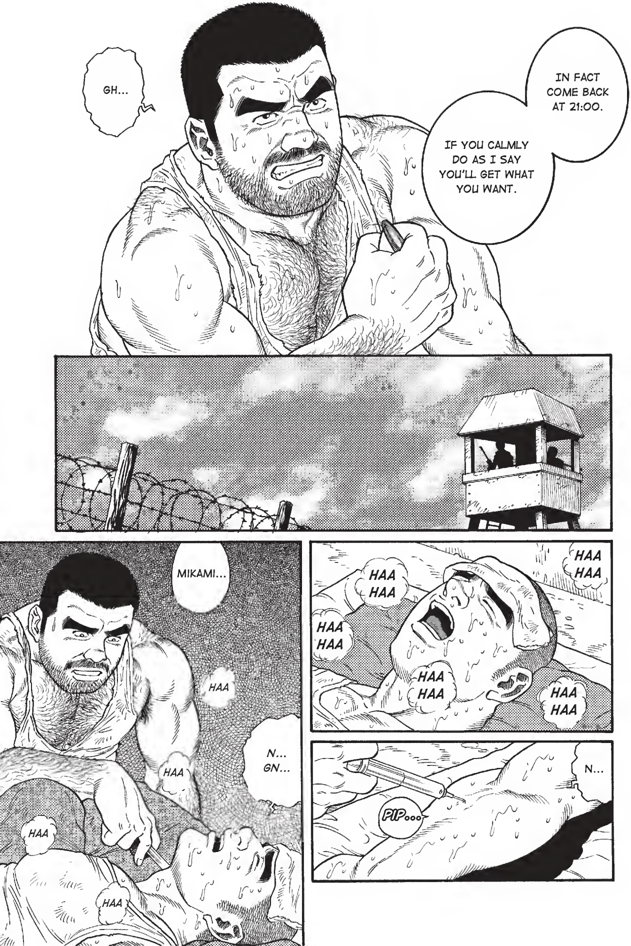

スッ
SST
ドカッ
DOOM
ニヤッ
SMIRK
!!
LICK THE SOLES OF MY SHOES.
THAT A NO?
HOW DARE YOU MOCK ME!
Y-YOU...

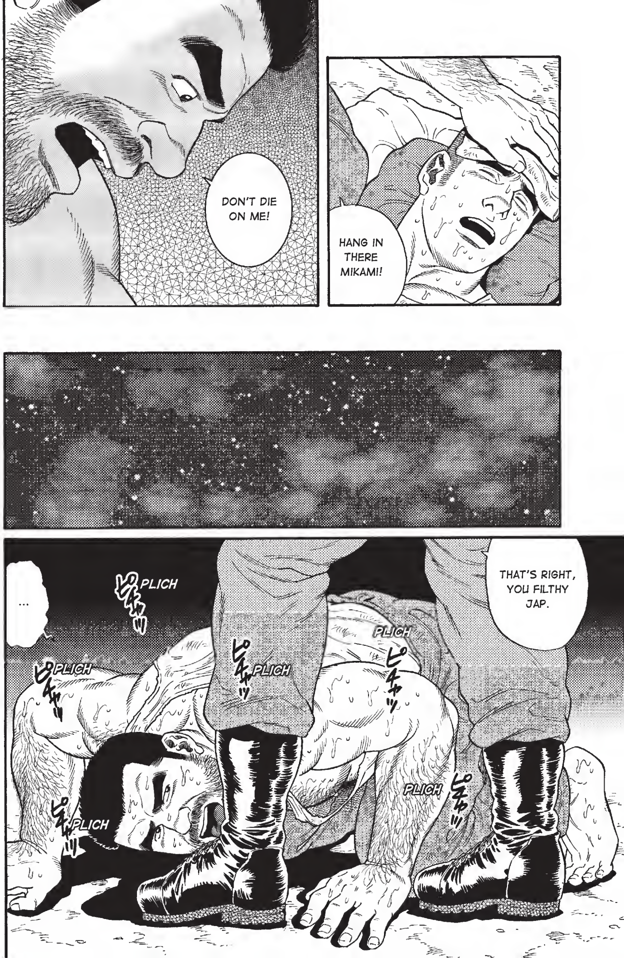

GRR...
TAP TAP
トーンッ
トーンッ
BUT YOU DO NEED THIS MEDICINE, RIGHT?
Quinine
THAT'S OK.
TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP
...
NOW... WHAT WAS THAT AGAIN?
TAP TAP
GRR ...

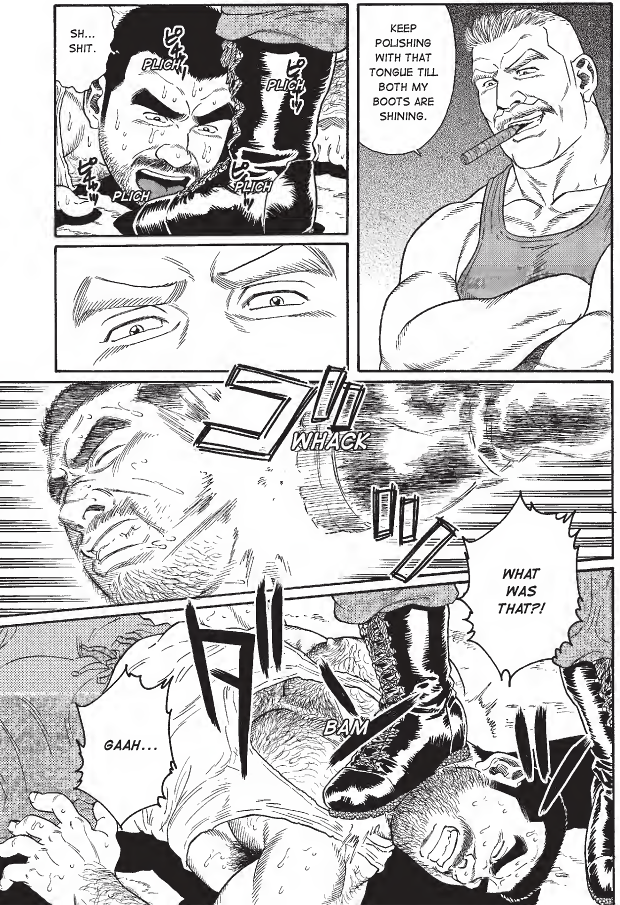

HMPH
THAT'S IT...
UGH... UGH...
PLICH PLICH ピチャッ ピチャッ
U...GGH...
PLICH ピチャッ
...
TAKE YOUR TIME. REALLY SAVOR IT.
PLICH ピチャッ
PLICH ピチャッ
LICK IT NICE AND SLOW.
PUFF
ガボ
GOB
OGH
NOW! OPEN YOUR MOUTH WIDE.
GH...

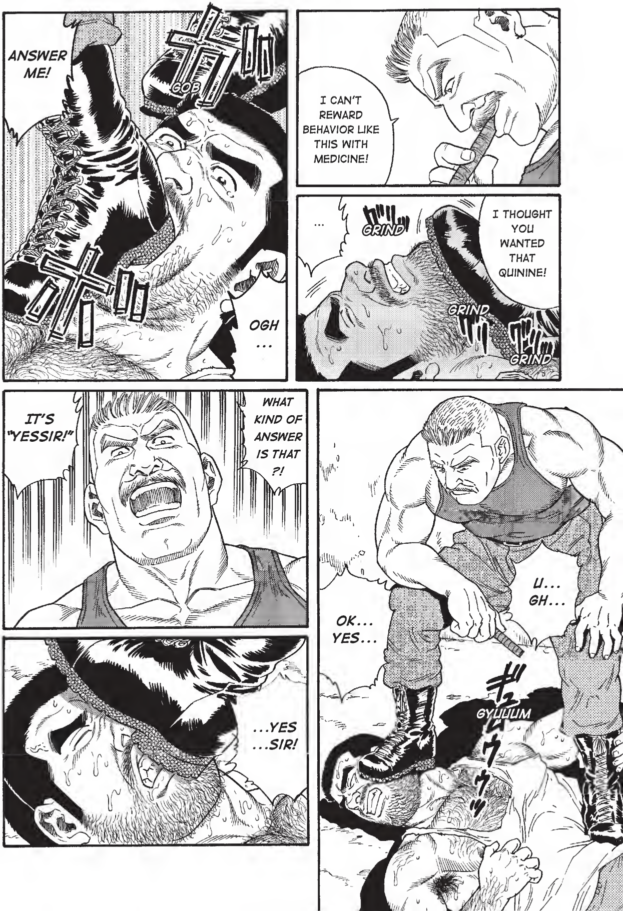

GRR
N... GH...
GRR
GUBH... GUBH...
GH... GH
GYUUU
HUH? WHAT'S THAT FIST?
YOU ANGRY? YOU WANNA HIT ME?
I WON'T MIND. HIT ME IF YOU WANT TO HIT ME.
TAP
TAP
TAP
Quinine
Quinine
GORI
WHAT'S WRONG? WHY DON'T YOU JUST GET UP AND HIT ME?
GORI
GORI
F...UCK
AWW... WHY WON'T YOU HIT ME?
HA HA HA HA HA HA

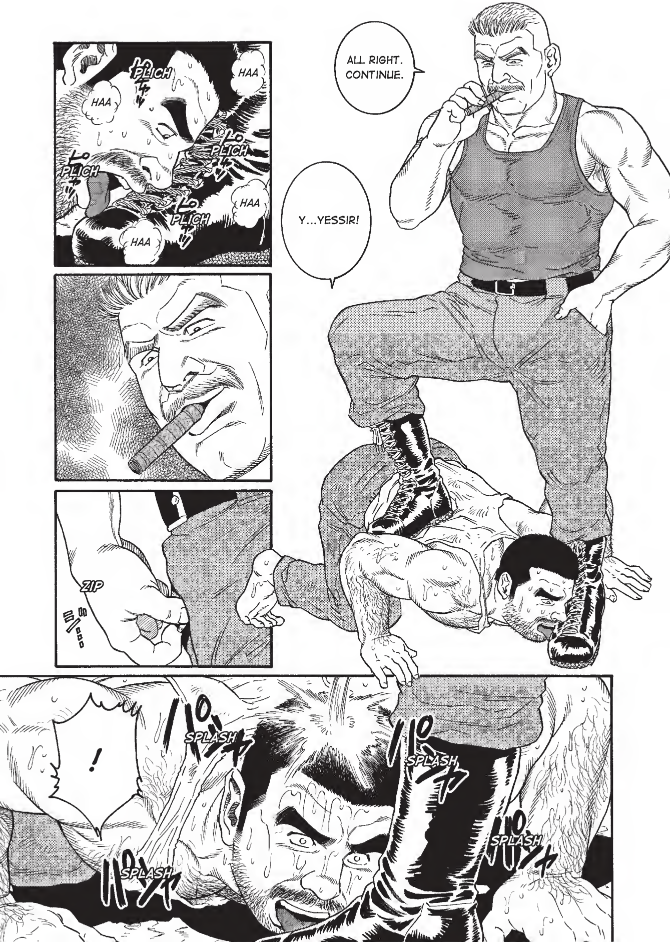

PUT OUT YOUR HAND.
ROLL
コロンッ
H... HEY!
THAT'S IT?!
YEAH. ONE DOSE OF QUININE.
B-BUT YOU KNOW IT'S NOT ENOUGH.
OF COURSE I KNOW THAT.
IT'LL TAKE AT LEAST FIVE DAYS, MAYBE A WEEK TO CURE.
!
YOU JUST COME BACK HERE WHEN YOU WANT YOUR NEXT DOSE.

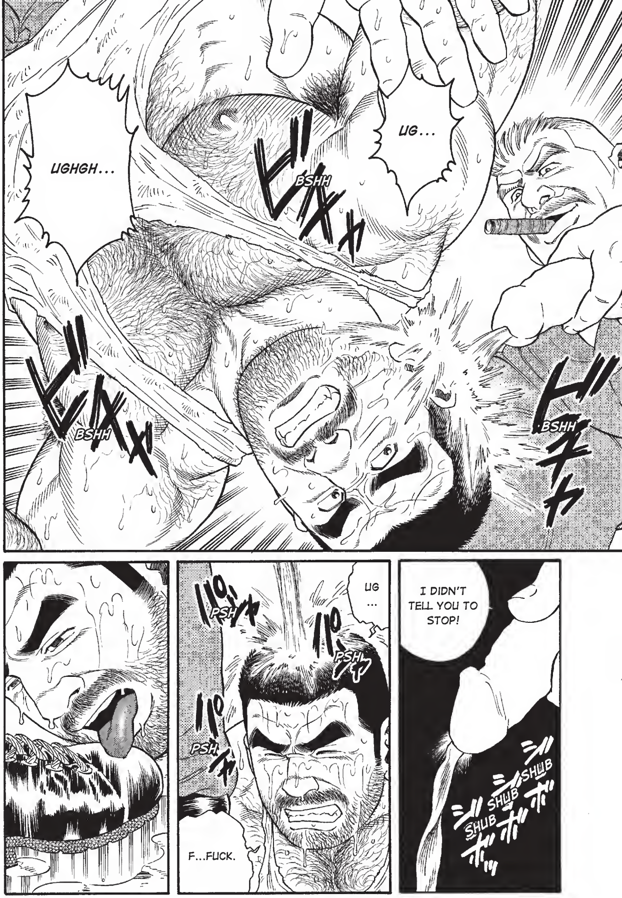

IN FACT COME BACK AT 21:00.
IF YOU CALMLY DO AS I SAY YOU'LL GET WHAT YOU WANT.
GH...
HAA HAA
HAA HAA
HAA HAA
HAA HAA
HAA HAA
N...
PIP...
MIKAMI...
HAA
N... GN...
HAA
HAA
HAA

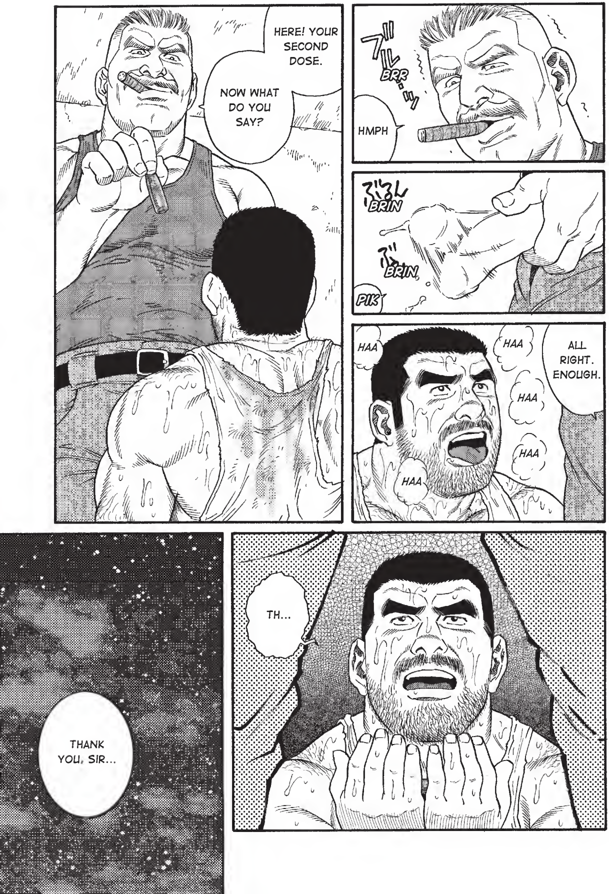

HANG IN THERE MIKAMI!
DON'T DIE ON ME!
THAT'S RIGHT, YOU FILTHY JAP.
ピチャッ PLICH
ピチャッ PLICH
ピチャッ PLICH
ピチャッ PLICH
ピチャッ PLICH
ピチャッ PLICH
ピチャッ PLICH
...

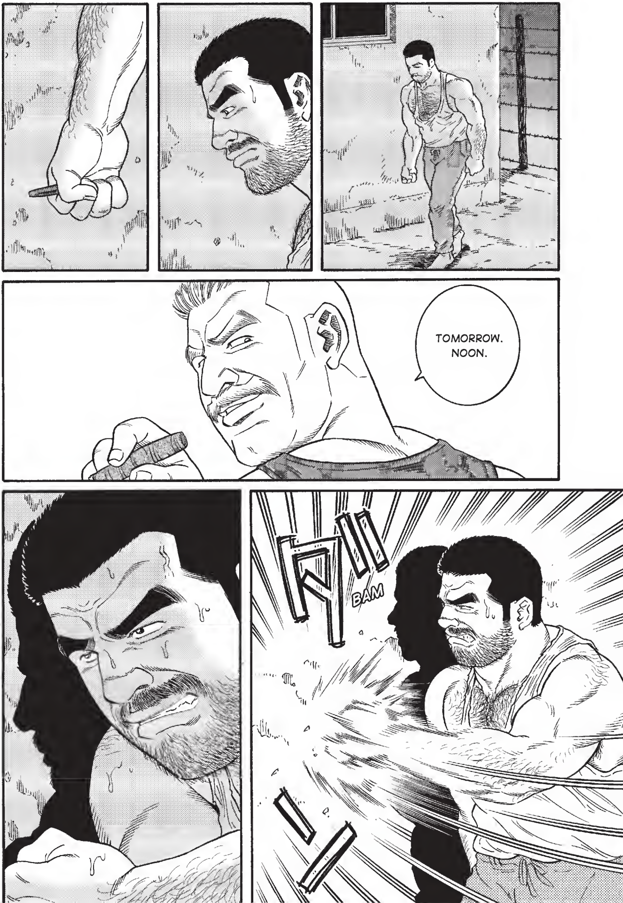

KEEP POLISHING WITH THAT TONGUE TILL BOTH MY BOOTS ARE SHINING.
SH... SHIT.
PLICH
PLICH
PLICH
PLICH
ゴッ
WHACK
WHAT WAS THAT?!
ダッ
BAM
GAAH...

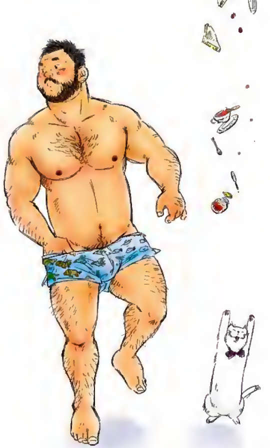

I CAN'T REWARD BEHAVIOR LIKE THIS WITH MEDICINE!
I THOUGHT YOU WANTED THAT QUININE!
GRIND
GRIND
GRIND
...
ANSWER ME!
GOB
OGH ...
U... GH...
OK... YES...
GYUUUM
WHAT KIND OF ANSWER IS THAT ?!
IT'S "YESSIR!"
...YES ...SIR!


ALL RIGHT. CONTINUE.
Y...YESSIR!
HAA
PLICH
HAA
PLICH
PLICH
HAA
PLICH
HAA
ZIP
!
SPLASH
SPLASH
SPLASH
SPLASH

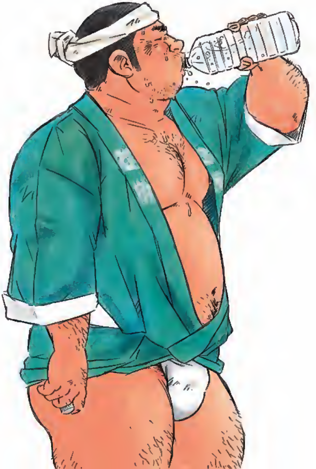

UG...
UGHGH...
BSHH
BSHH
BSHH
I DIDN'T TELL YOU TO STOP!
SHUB
SHUB
SHUB
UG ...
PSH
PSH
PSH
F...FUCK.


ブル
BRR...ッ
HMPH
ぶるん
BRIN
ぶ
BRIN
PIK
ALL RIGHT. ENOUGH.
HAA
HAA
HAA
HAA
HAA
HERE! YOUR SECOND DOSE.
NOW WHAT DO YOU SAY?
TH...
THANK YOU, SIR...


TOMORROW. NOON.
BAM



Illustrations from Inu Yoshi's desk calendars for Big Gym



Inu Yoshi
犬義

The world of Inu Yoshi is colorful, vibrant, and inviting. His curvaceous, flirtatious characters give off an air of potent sexuality, but more substantially, Inu Yoshi excels at establishing warmhearted intimacy and crafting cheerful, comforting stories that offer solace to his readers. "When I was a kid, reading manga was pure fun—an excuse to get away from schoolwork. It was to escape the doldrums of childhood," recalls Inu Yoshi. "I would notice when something in the comics affected me profoundly, sure—but it's still essentially a means of escape and not much more. In that sense, I think of my stories as ways for people to escape from their everyday lives, or a way for them to relax."

Like many of his contemporaries, Inu Yoshi found his way into gay manga through *G-men* magazine. "The magazine advertised Gengoroh Tagame's Award for New Artists. I wasn't aspiring to become a manga artist, but I did like to draw," he remembers. "I thought, 'I've been reading these magazines a really long time—why not?' When they actually published it, I was so excited. I was actually surprised when it did well, and my stuff was being well-received."

More than a decade later, Inu Yoshi's work is some of the most easily recognizable on the scene. Big Gym, one of Japan's preeminitent retailers of gay manga, hired Inu Yoshi as their in-house graphic designer and illustrator. His adorable *chibi* mini-men adorn the website, flyers, and signage for all three of Big Gym's Tokyo locations, inviting customers to browse the store's wide assortment of gay lifestyle necessities, from *fundoshi* to sex toys. Inu Yoshi even has his own calendar sold exclusively in-store.

Outside of his day job, Inu Yoshi's art has been featured in solo exhibitions from Tokyo to Osaka—often at gay community spaces like Akta and Dista.B, which perform the dual function of providing sexual health services and fostering LGBT culture. While Inu Yoshi continues to create manga for gay magazines, he somehow finds time to produce his own *doujinshi*, which he sells independently at Comiket as well as smaller conventions specifically geared toward gay manga fans.

"When I write for magazines, I collaborate with the editors," says Inu Yoshi, explaining the distinctions between the two formats. "I'm more or less told what to draw. They're sort of on spec, assignments almost, whereas the stuff I show at Comiket is obviously my personal work. I'm trying to cater to a readership, but I get to imbue the comics with more of my own stories and my own ideas. I did think that format would be more freeing, but it's also actually much more stressful because I feel more responsibility over my work. I have this stress of owning up to my own content, but it is much more gratifying when I finish my own piece, because I've done it all myself."

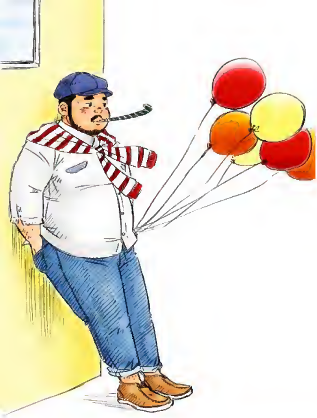
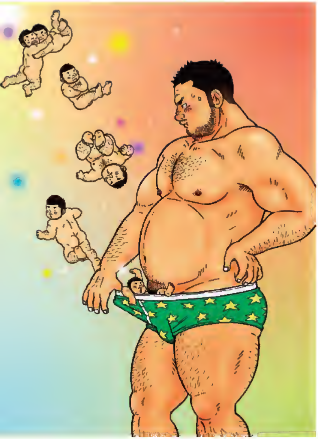


Illustration from Inu Yoshi's 2013 desk calendar for Big Gym



Artwork for a 2010 group show in Osaka called *How to Sex* organized by the HIV awarenesss organization PLuS+ Final

Despite his skyrocketing popularity as an artist, Inu Yoshi keeps a careful distance between his artwork and his personal life. "I don't really have interactions with fans other than through Twitter, under my pen name," he says. "If people ask about me or communicate with me, I'll certainly respond. Of course, at events like Comiket it's a much more proximate relationship, and I meet people but really don't have much interaction with fans. Almost none."

The idea of opening up about himself online makes Inu Yoshi uncomfortable, he says, "because my writing is pure fiction, and it's not a depiction of my personal life. I don't want my readers to read my work and think, 'Oh, this is totally him.' I want absolutely no confusion between what I write, which is total fiction, and who I am." For this reason, Inu Yoshi chose to keep his face obscured in the portraits for this book. "I think what [Gengoroh] Tagame has done is really interesting," he notes, referring to the artist's willingness to step into the spotlight. "He has completely opened channels with everybody, and he's not afraid to be affiliated with his work—but it's also probably much closer to his personal life than it is for me."[1]

Despite working for a retailer of adult goods and making art for adult magazines, Inu Yoshi says the erotic isn't very important to his writing. "I don't really want to put erotic scenes in my stories," he explains. "But it's what sells magazines, and the magazines say it has to have that. The stark impact of having those scenes in my work is incredible. Many more people pick up my stories if there's that kind of content in them. So that's part of it."

"It is sort of a necessary evil in that sense. The other thing is that some people just aren't very good at erotica, and I myself don't think that I'm very good at it. You'll see what I mean, but... I would like for my erotic scenes to create more internal excitement and an emotional reaction. I think to suddenly throw sex in there ad hoc is not good for the storytelling aspect. There are of course other artists who are very good at it, and therefore do more of it. It's just sex scene after sex scene, but that's not really me."

Surprisingly, when asked if he considers himself a romantic artist, Inu Yoshi bristles at the notion. "I actually hate drawing love stories," he says. "Personally, I lack experience, you could say, at love. I'm not good at it, and in that sense, I'm not afraid to say I'm an absolute beginner." Despite this humble self-assessment, themes of love and romantic longing permeate the artist's work.

Inu Yoshi feels most fulfilled as an artist when he manages to successfully portray a mood or sense of emotion. "I guess I'm happiest when I draw my favorite kind of mood on a character; if I can really nail that expression or atmosphere. Of course the story's also very important, but there's nothing like when I effectively get that look down. For instance, this is, I think, my personal best side profile ever," he tells us,

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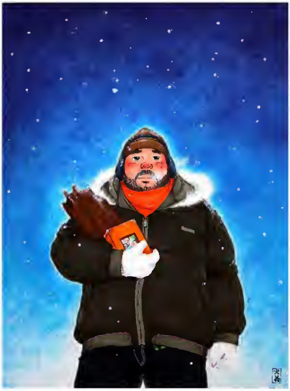
[1] It should be noted that when Gengoroh Tagame was asked at the Toronto Comic Arts Festival how much of the sex in his manga he's actually experienced firsthand, his deadpan reply was "About 30 percent."



Artwork for a 2012 group show in Tokyo called *Feast of Yukihana* organized by Community Center Akta

pointing out a print he'd brought along to the interview. "Nobody else can know that but me. Obviously they're just drawings, and these people don't have souls, but if people read this and see that they're having fun, you feel like you kind of know them."

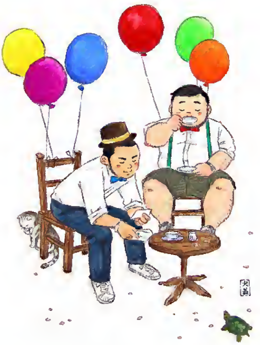
For Inu Yoshi, achieving the intended response from his readers requires going beyond the aesthetic status quo. "In manga, you draw an open mouth and it's somebody smiling or laughing. But I want to convey joy by means other than the simple, obvious tools. When I feel internally that this is joyful, I feel really gratified."

Joy is a crucial element of Inu Yoshi's work. "I'm pretty sure people don't pick up manga to feel sad," he muses. "I want to do through manga what manga has done for me, which is bring happiness and relief. Obviously if it's all fun, it gets boring, so it's important to show some conflict. Overcoming hardship–that's an incredibly joyful feeling, too. You have to be in a low place before you can feel better. It's important for gay people to feel uplifted, so that's important for me. I want to bring joy."

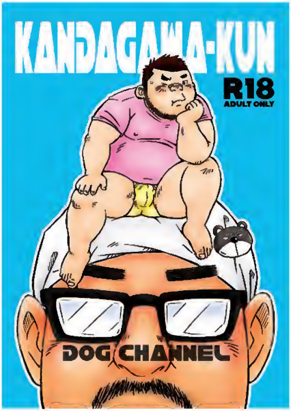
It was at a low point in his own life that Inu Yoshi first discovered gay manga. In high school, the artist remembers, "I didn't have any friends who were gay or anything like that. I didn't know of anybody else at school, not a teacher, not a classmate, not alumni, nobody that was gay. I was totally closeted, totally on my own." Although it was against school policy, Inu Yoshi took a part-time job far away from campus. "On my break one day, I went into a bookstore and found a gay magazine. I couldn't believe it! I pulled it down and started reading it right there. I was like, 'Oh, my god.' I couldn't buy it at that exact moment because I was on a work break and it was too embarrassing. So I went home, I put on a hat, came back, and tried to get it without being seen."

Gengoroh Tagame's work was in that magazine. "I loved how wild and hardcore it was, how erotic and savage it was. The different perspective really inspired me." Gay magazines also offered Inu Yoshi his first entrée into the hidden world of queer spaces. "In the back of the magazine there was information about stores and bars and places like that. I would even go to what's called *hattenba* (cruising locations). But I was always private about it and did it alone. When I got to college, things totally changed. There were other gay people who were visibly out. I remember this one kid who showed up to class wearing this totally flamboyant fur coat, and that's when I started to go out much more. I was at the gay bars all the time, and I started making gay friends."

These days Inu Yoshi has a good number of close gay friends, "but unfortunately none of them read manga," he mentions. "...So none of them have read my work. I can't really confer with them or talk about the industry." For that, he turns to other *mangaka* on Twitter. "My friends don't oppose it. It's not like they *hate* manga or anything. They're just not into it. They're probably more into music and other media. Through Twitter, though, I've realized that my friends are in the minority. Actually, a lot of gay people love comics,



Artwork for the *Feast of Yukihana* show, also used as a postcard for Osaka community center Dista.



Cover of *Kandagawa-kun* (2012), *doujinshi* by Inu Yoshi

and it's popular. Fortunately, it's not like all gays look down upon it or anything."

If anything, gay manga seems to be growing in popularity, Inu Yoshi has observed. "Until ten years ago, there weren't a lot of *mangaka* doing gay content. There weren't a lot of publications doing gay manga. But now there are so many more, so now it's not just that there are gay artists, but that there is a variety of gay content. In fact it's so diverse, that there are complete books that are just gay comics."

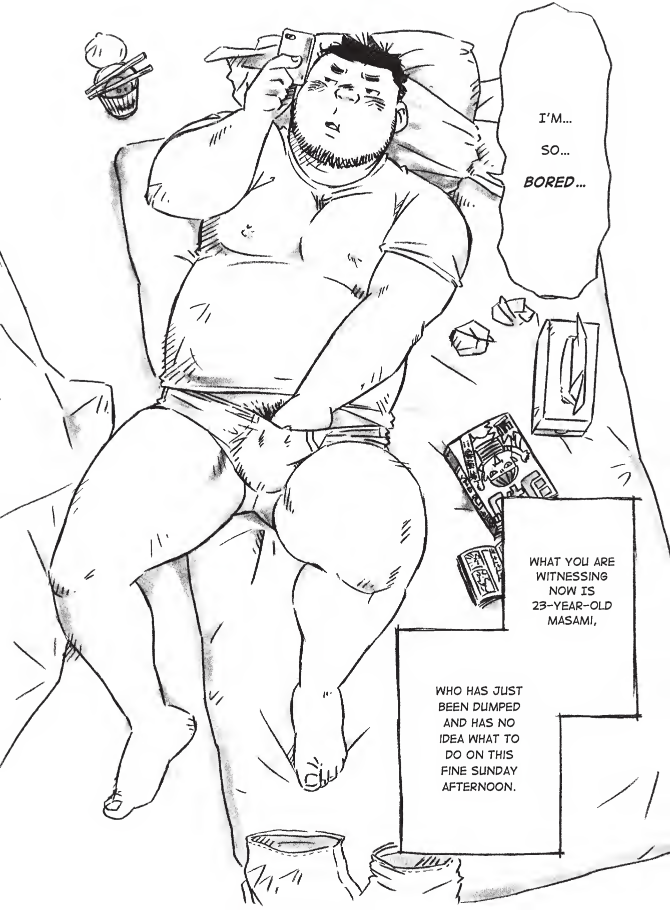
Inu Yoshi offers a case in point: the convention-defying work of *mangaka* Nohara Kuro. "[Kuro] draws the sort of slow, everyday life of gay men, with no erotica. There's no sex in it. He has a piece called *Milk*, for example, and it's all about emotional development. Reading something like that gives me the courage to draw more nonerotic content. For Japanese gay people, too, I think it's good for them to know that this kind of content is out there."

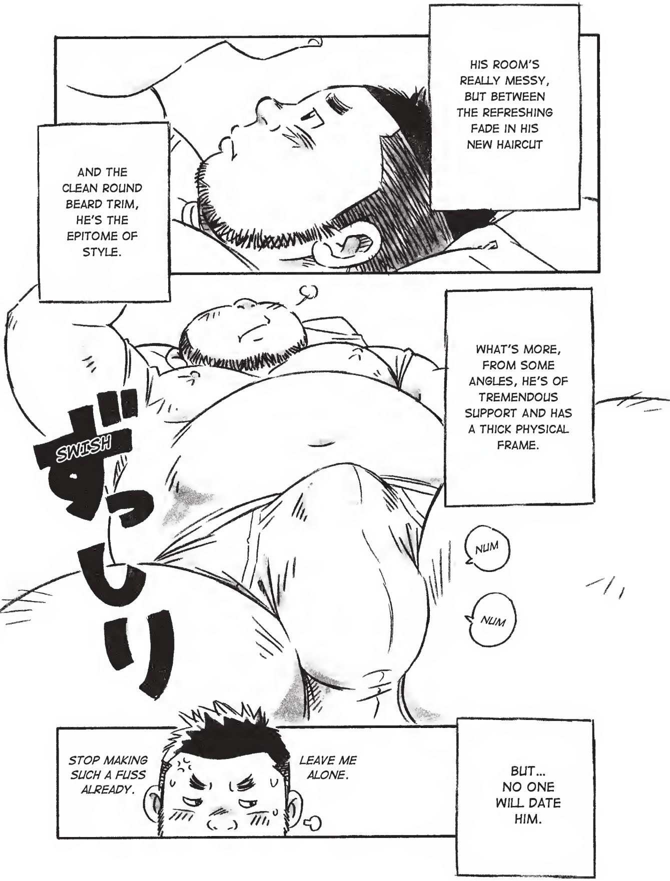
Looking forward, Inu Yoshi finds a source of strength and inspiration in up-and-coming gay artists. "I have more to learn from younger generations of gay men in Japan than I have to teach them," Inu Yoshi says, with characteristic modesty. "They have a much richer imagination and a bigger emotional vocabulary. If anything, I'm learning a lot from them. If I were to impart any message to them, it's to keep living freely and to keep being uninhibited about their feelings. Because that's how my generation and older people live: vicariously. We learn by seeing younger people living the way we should be living. And then we open up. I want to keep being more and more open."

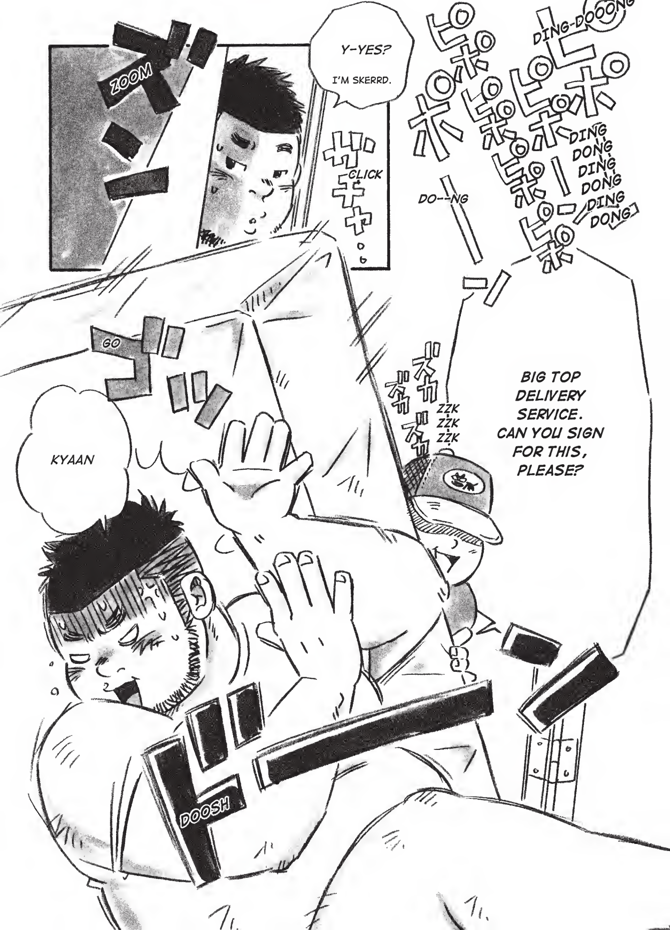
KANDAGAWA-KUN

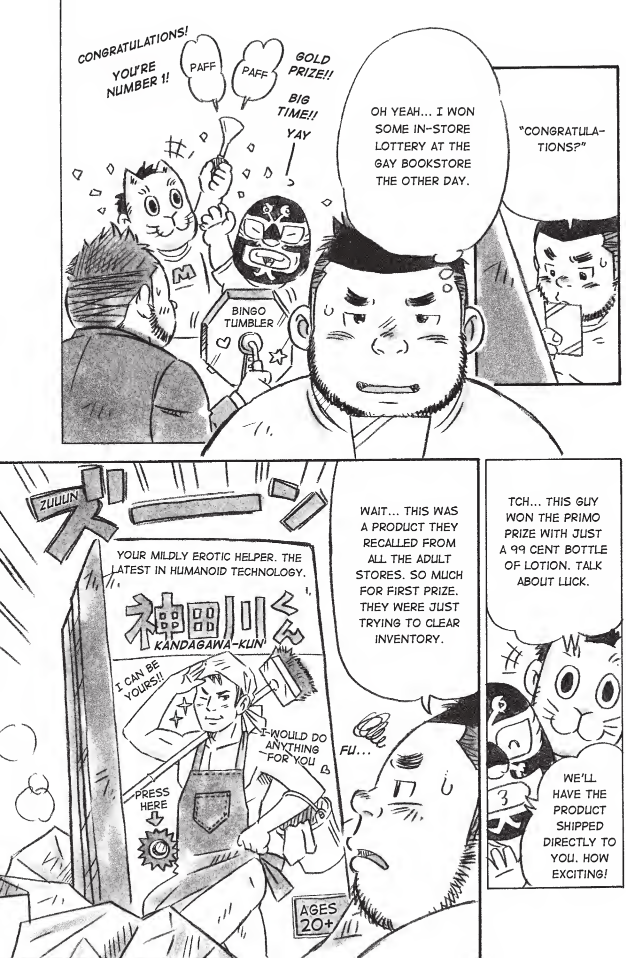
神田川くん

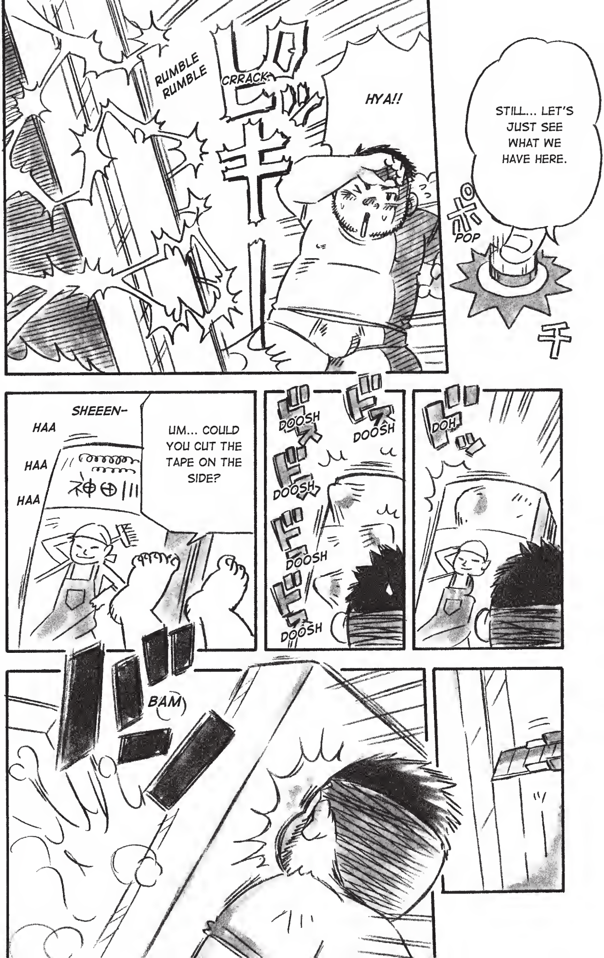
BY INU YOSHI

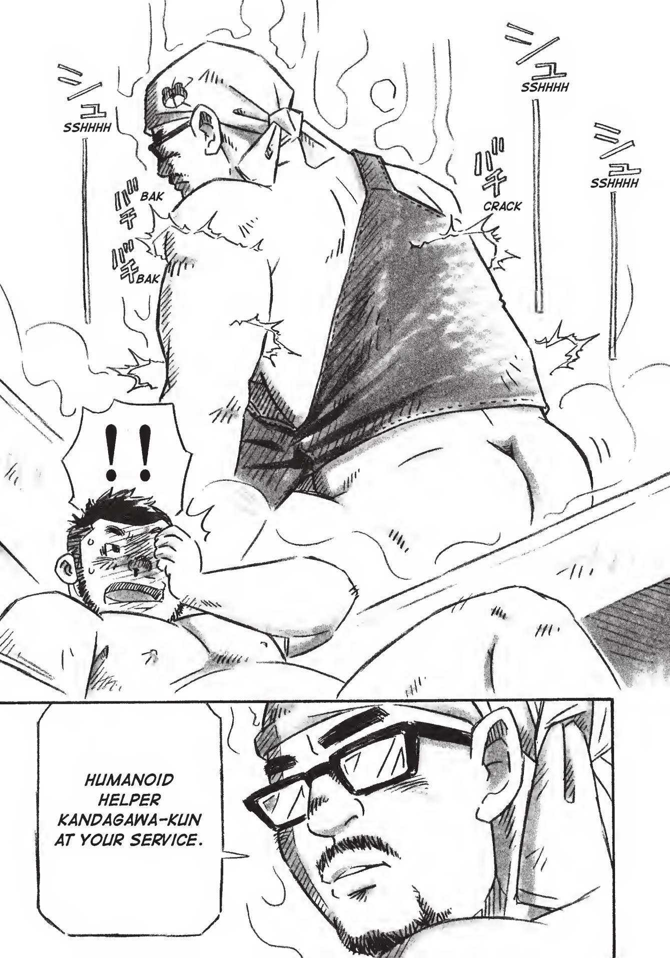

I'M... SO... *BORED*...
WHAT YOU ARE WITNESSING NOW IS 23-YEAR-OLD MASAMI,
WHO HAS JUST BEEN DUMPED AND HAS NO IDEA WHAT TO DO ON THIS FINE SUNDAY AFTERNOON.

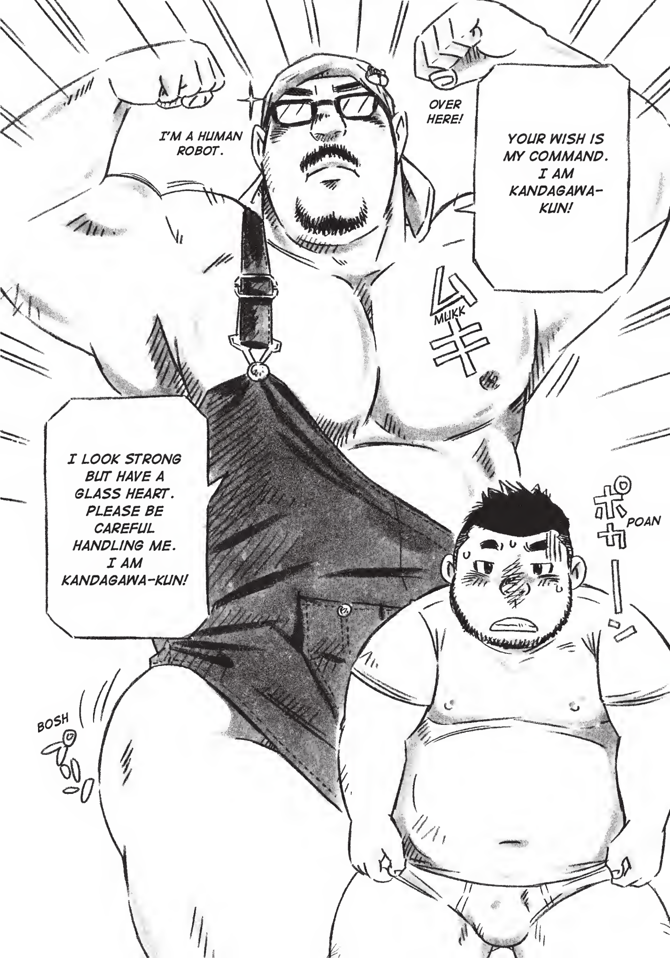

HIS ROOM'S REALLY MESSY, BUT BETWEEN THE REFRESHING FADE IN HIS NEW HAIRCUT
AND THE CLEAN ROUND BEARD TRIM, HE'S THE EPITOME OF STYLE.
WHAT'S MORE, FROM SOME ANGLES, HE'S OF TREMENDOUS SUPPORT AND HAS A THICK PHYSICAL FRAME.
ずっしり
SWISH
NUM
NUM
BUT... NO ONE WILL DATE HIM.
LEAVE ME ALONE.
STOP MAKING SUCH A FUSS ALREADY.

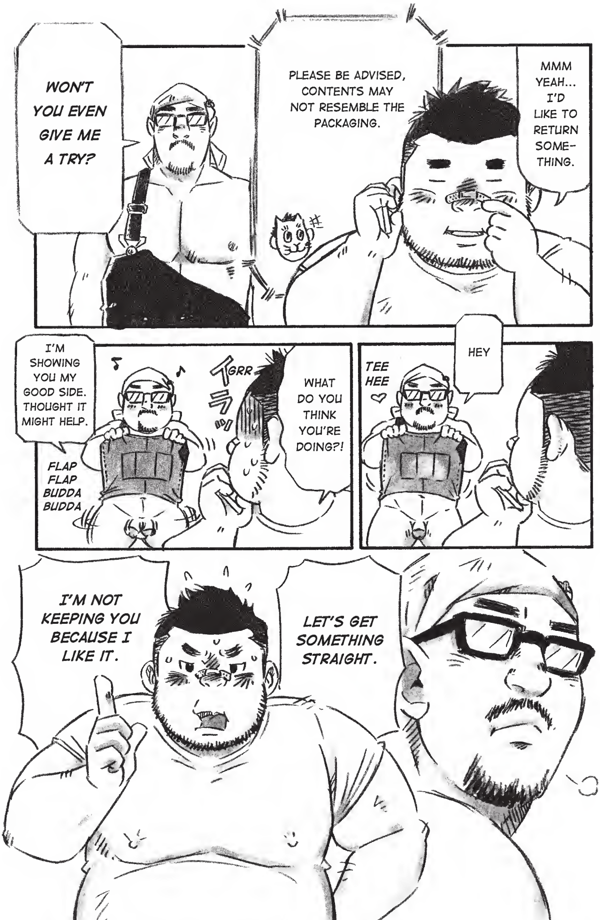

DING-DOOONG
DING DONG DING DONG DING DONG
DO--NG
BIG TOP DELIVERY SERVICE. CAN YOU SIGN FOR THIS, PLEASE?
ZZK ZZK ZZK
Y-YES? I'M SKERRD.
ガチャ。
CLICK
ZOOM
ゴッ
GO
KYAAN
DOOSH

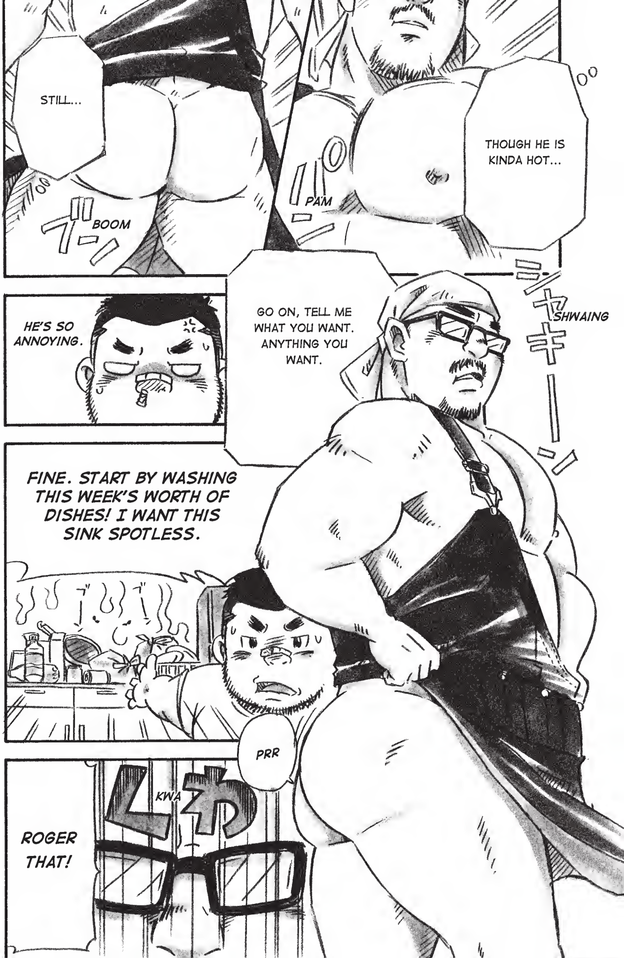

"CONGRATULATIONS?"
OH YEAH... I WON SOME IN-STORE LOTTERY AT THE GAY BOOKSTORE THE OTHER DAY.
GOLD PRIZE!!
BIG TIME!!
YAY
PAFF
PAFF
CONGRATULATIONS!
YOU'RE NUMBER 1!
M
BINGO TUMBLER
TCH... THIS GUY WON THE PRIMO PRIZE WITH JUST A 99 CENT BOTTLE OF LOTION. TALK ABOUT LUCK.
WE'LL HAVE THE PRODUCT SHIPPED DIRECTLY TO YOU. HOW EXCITING!
WAIT... THIS WAS A PRODUCT THEY RECALLED FROM ALL THE ADULT STORES. SO MUCH FOR FIRST PRIZE. THEY WERE JUST TRYING TO CLEAR INVENTORY.
FU...
ZUUUN
YOUR MILDLY EROTIC HELPER. THE LATEST IN HUMANOID TECHNOLOGY.
神田川くん
KANDAGAWA-KUN
I CAN BE YOURS!!
I WOULD DO ANYTHING FOR YOU
PRESS HERE
AGES 20+

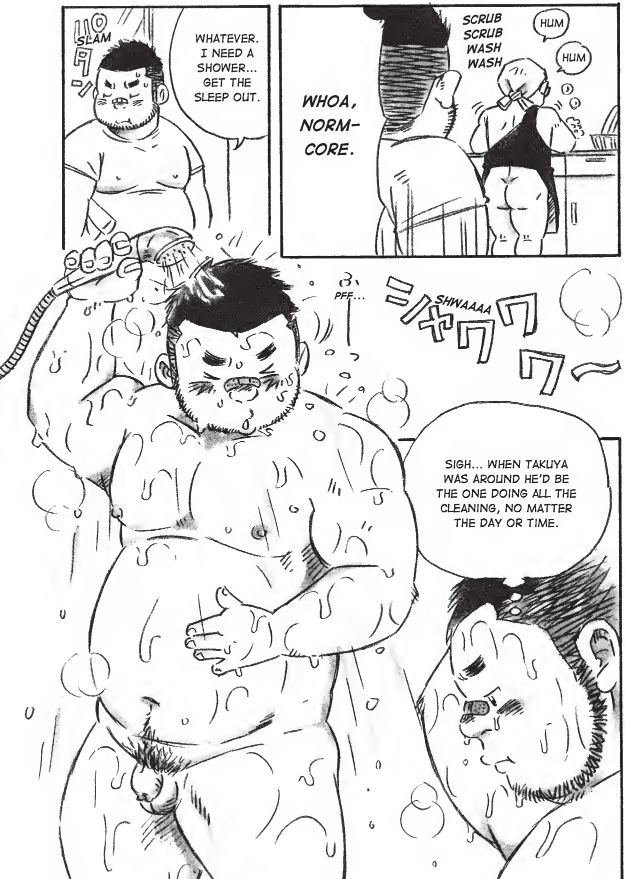

STILL... LET'S JUST SEE WHAT WE HAVE HERE.
ポ
POP
チ
HYA!!
CRRACK
RUMBLE RUMBLE
DOH
DOOSH
DOOSH
DOOSH
DOOSH
DOOSH
UM... COULD YOU CUT THE TAPE ON THE SIDE?
SHEEEN-
HAA
HAA
HAA
神田
BAM

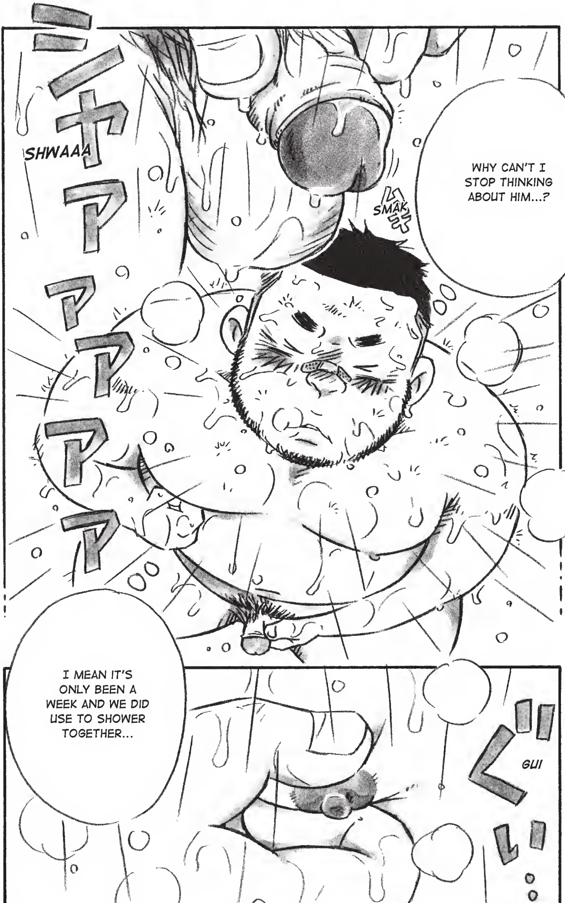

シュ SSHHHH
シュ SSHHHH
バチ CRACK
シュ SSHHHH
バチ BAK
バチ BAK
!!
HUMANOID HELPER KANDAGAWA-KUN AT YOUR SERVICE.

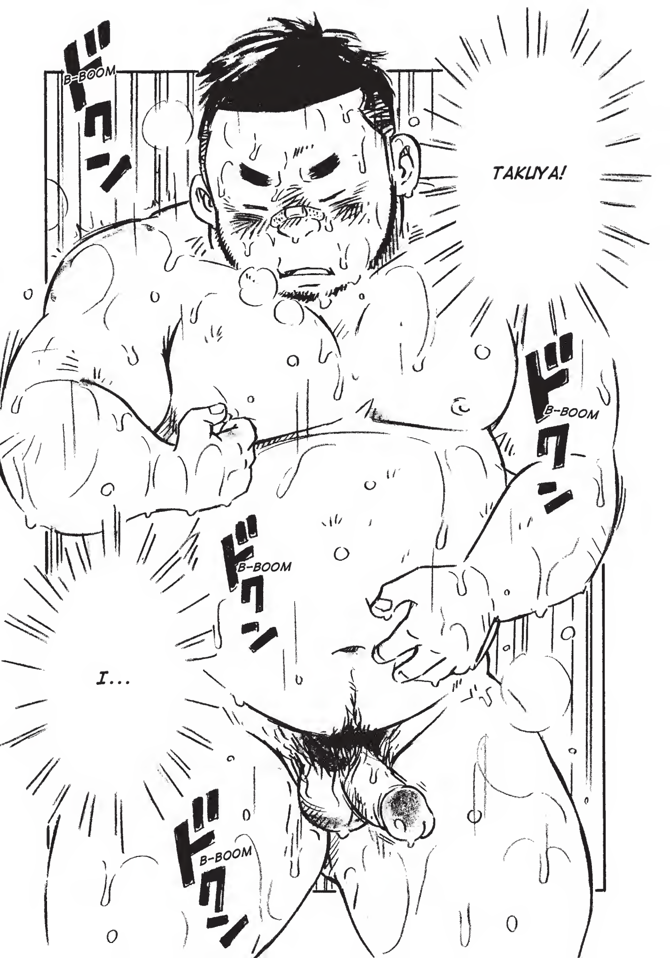

OVER HERE!
YOUR WISH IS MY COMMAND. I AM KANDAGAWA-KUN!
I'M A HUMAN ROBOT.
ムキ
MUKK
ポカーン
POAN
I LOOK STRONG BUT HAVE A GLASS HEART. PLEASE BE CAREFUL HANDLING ME. I AM KANDAGAWA-KUN!
BOSH

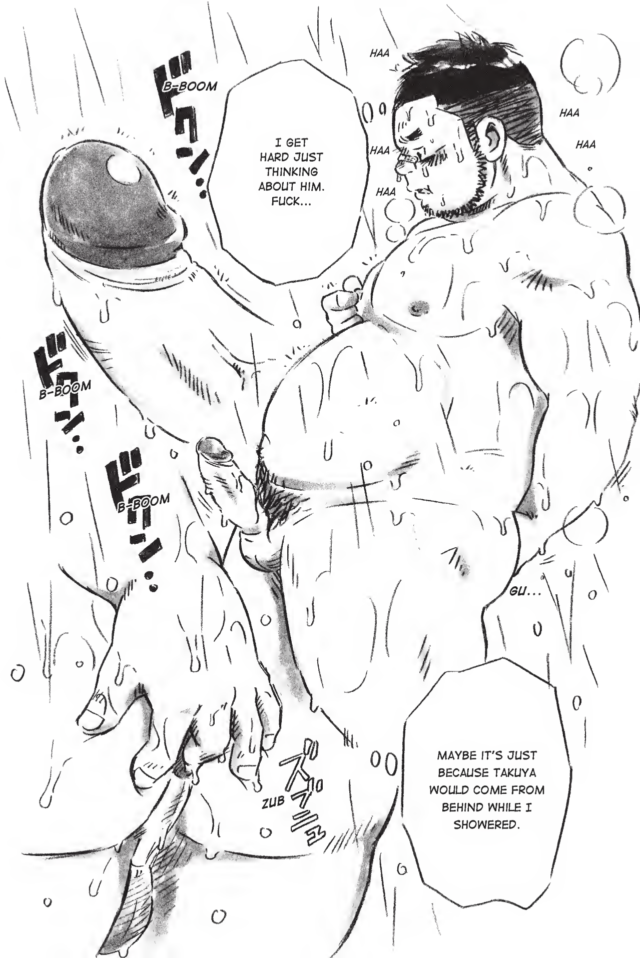

MMM YEAH... I'D LIKE TO RETURN SOMETHING.
PLEASE BE ADVISED, CONTENTS MAY NOT RESEMBLE THE PACKAGING.
WON'T YOU EVEN GIVE ME A TRY?
HEY
TEE HEE
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!
イラ
GRR
I'M SHOWING YOU MY GOOD SIDE. THOUGHT IT MIGHT HELP.
FLAP FLAP BUDDA BUDDA
LET'S GET SOMETHING STRAIGHT.
I'M NOT KEEPING YOU BECAUSE I LIKE IT.

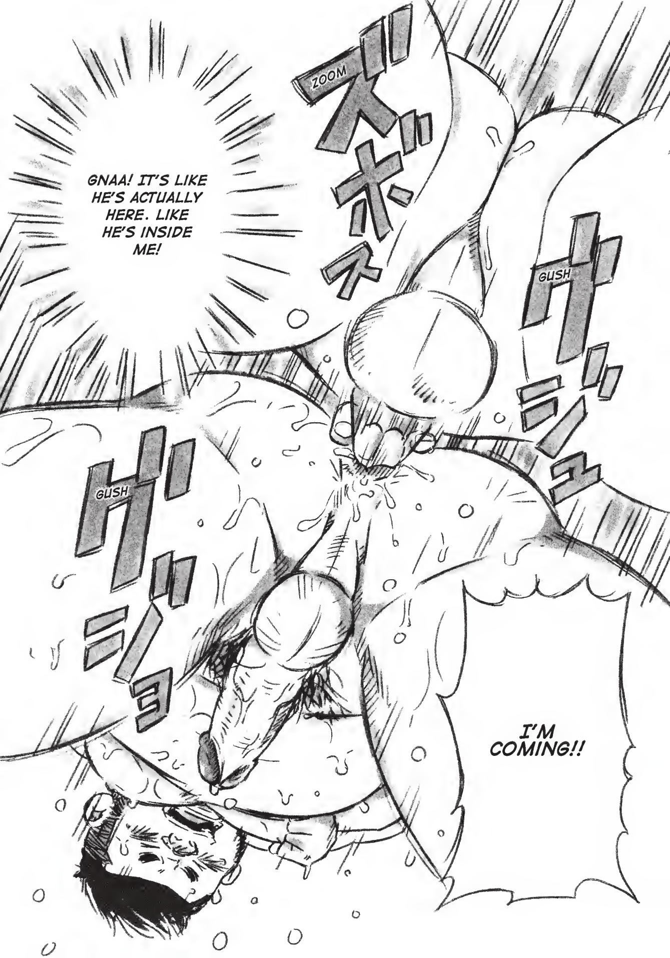

THOUGH HE IS KINDA HOT...
PAM
STILL...
BOOM
GO ON, TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT. ANYTHING YOU WANT.
SHWAING
HE'S SO ANNOYING.
FINE. START BY WASHING THIS WEEK'S WORTH OF DISHES! I WANT THIS SINK SPOTLESS.
PRR
KWA
ROGER THAT!

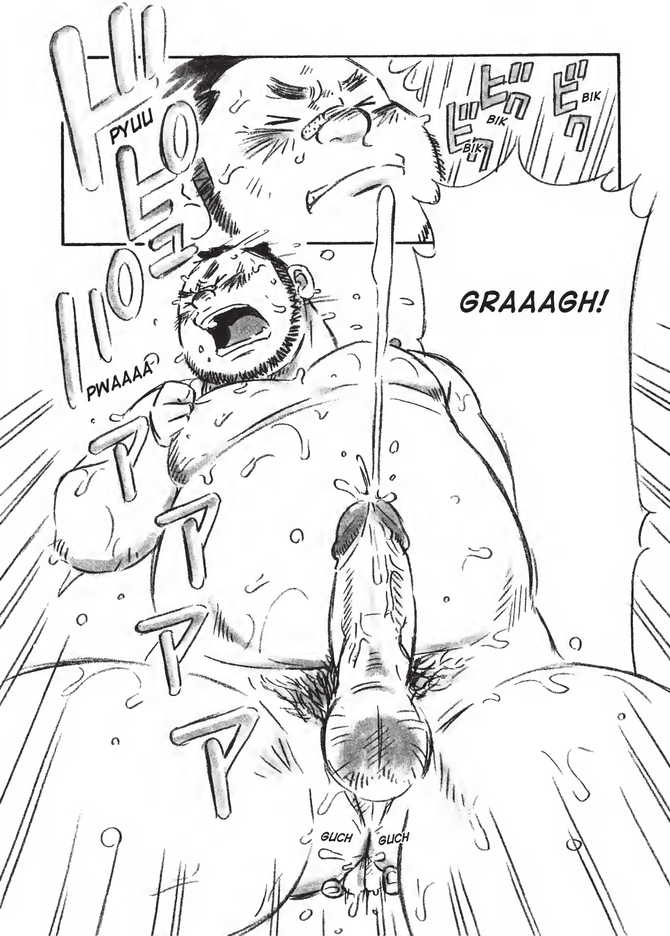

SCRUB SCRUB WASH WASH
HUM
HUM
WHOA, NORM-CORE.
WHATEVER. I NEED A SHOWER... GET THE SLEEP OUT.
バロタッ
SLAM
シャワワワー
SHWAAAA
ふ…
PFF...
SIGH... WHEN TAKUYA WAS AROUND HE'D BE THE ONE DOING ALL THE CLEANING, NO MATTER THE DAY OR TIME.

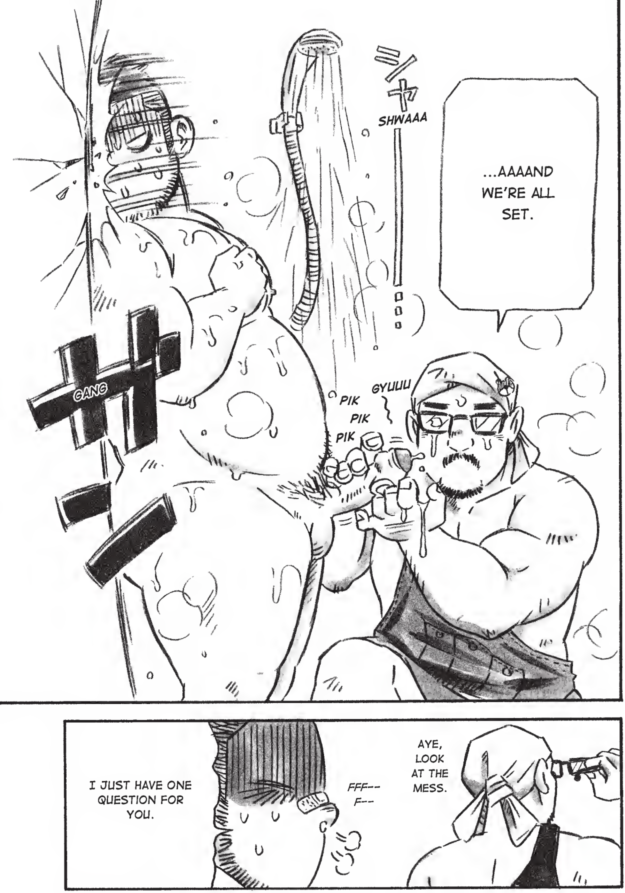

WHY CAN'T I STOP THINKING ABOUT HIM...?
ムギ
SMAK
シャアアアア
SHWAAA
ぐい
GUI
I MEAN IT'S ONLY BEEN A WEEK AND WE DID USE TO SHOWER TOGETHER...

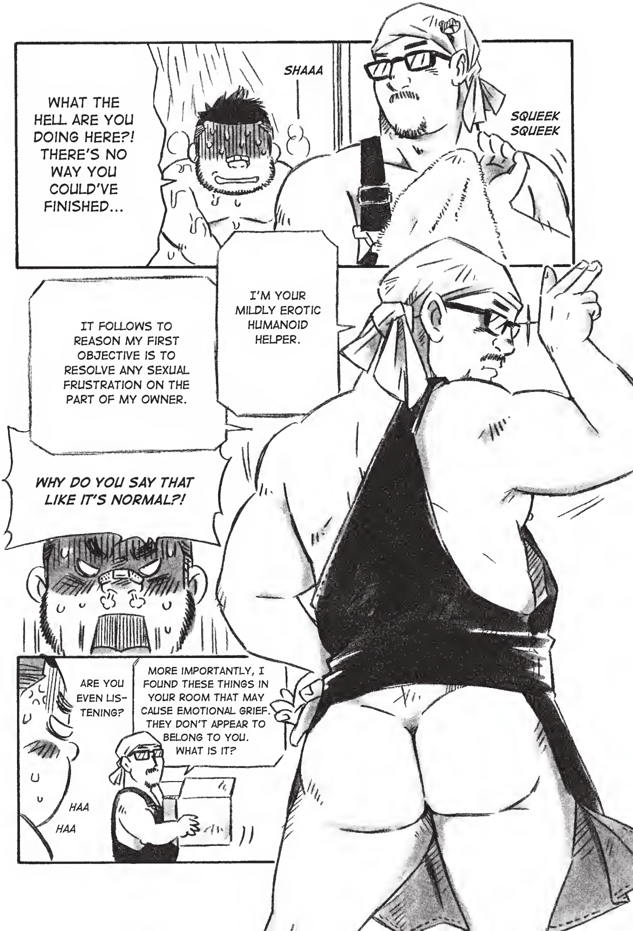

TAKUYA!
ドクン
B-BOOM
ドクン
B-BOOM
ドクン
B-BOOM
I...
ドクン
B-BOOM

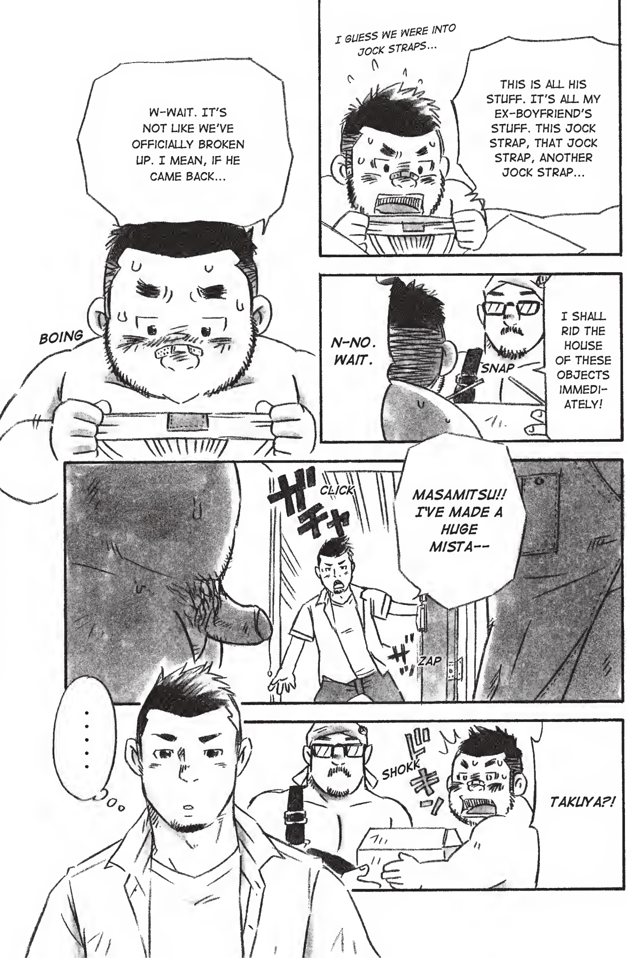

HAA
HAA
HAA
HAA
HAA
HAA
I GET HARD JUST THINKING ABOUT HIM. FUCK...
B-BOOM
B-BOOM
B-BOOM
GU...
MAYBE IT'S JUST BECAUSE TAKUYA WOULD COME FROM BEHIND WHILE I SHOWERED.
ZUB

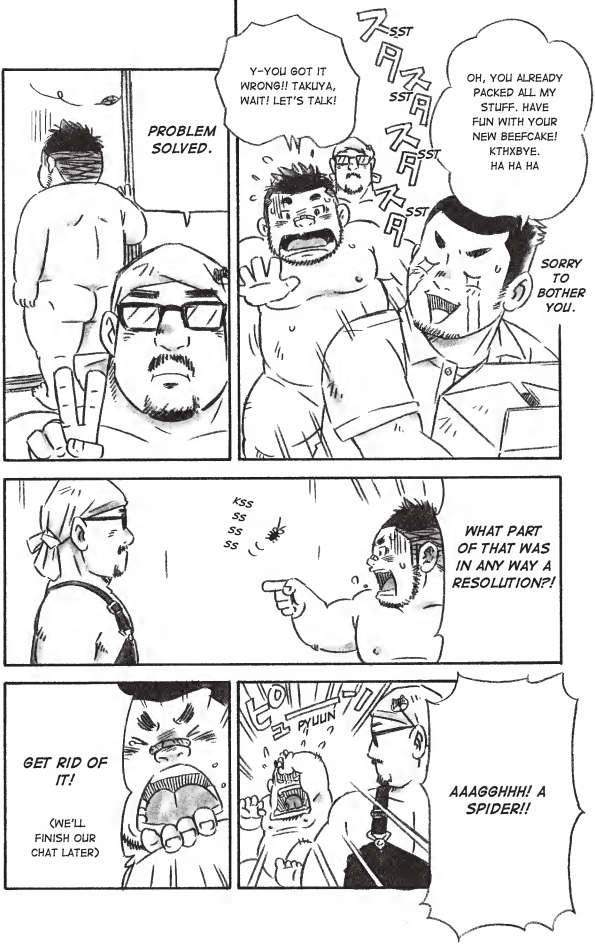

ズボス
ZOOM
GNAA! IT'S LIKE HE'S ACTUALLY HERE. LIKE HE'S INSIDE ME!
グッシュ
GUSH
グッショ
GUSH
I'M COMING!!

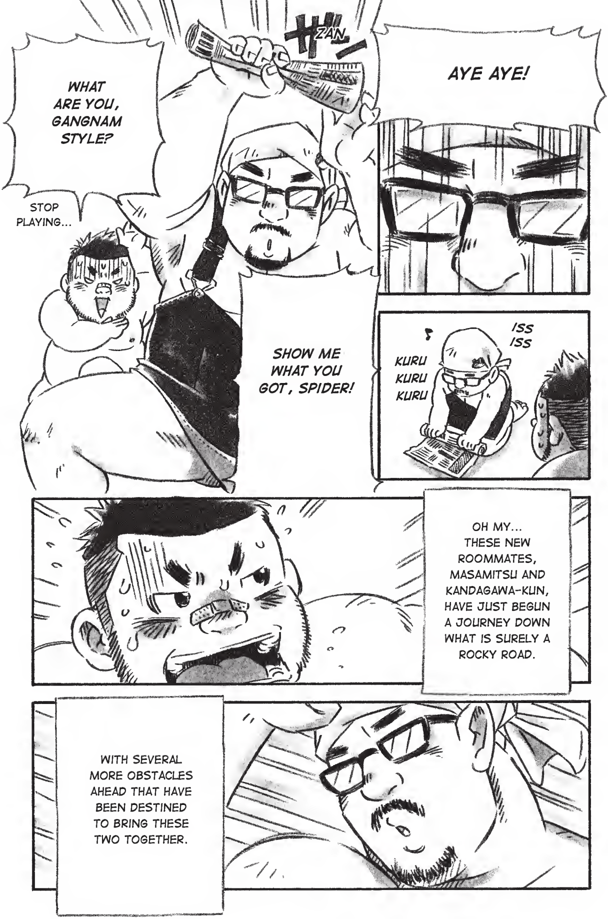

ビクビクビク
BIK
BIK
BIK
PYUU
パアアアア
PWAAAA
GRAAAGH!
GUCH
GUCH

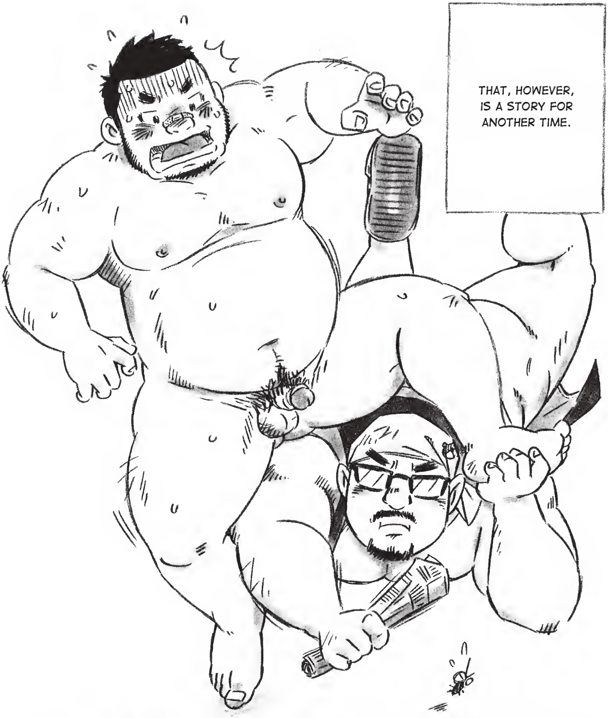

...AAAAND WE'RE ALL SET.
SHWAAA
GYUUU
PIK PIK PIK
GANG
AYE, LOOK AT THE MESS.
FFF-- F--
I JUST HAVE ONE QUESTION FOR YOU.

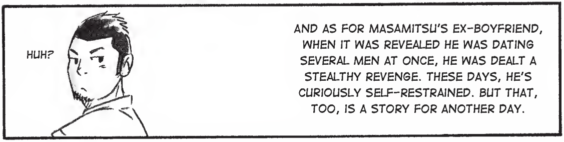

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE?! THERE'S NO WAY YOU COULD'VE FINISHED...
SHAAA
SQUEEK SQUEEK
I'M YOUR MILDLY EROTIC HUMANOID HELPER.
IT FOLLOWS TO REASON MY FIRST OBJECTIVE IS TO RESOLVE ANY SEXUAL FRUSTRATION ON THE PART OF MY OWNER.
WHY DO YOU SAY THAT LIKE IT'S NORMAL?!
ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING?
MORE IMPORTANTLY, I FOUND THESE THINGS IN YOUR ROOM THAT MAY CAUSE EMOTIONAL GRIEF. THEY DON'T APPEAR TO BELONG TO YOU. WHAT IS IT?
HAA
HAA


I GUESS WE WERE INTO JOCK STRAPS...
THIS IS ALL HIS STUFF. IT'S ALL MY EX-BOYFRIEND'S STUFF. THIS JOCK STRAP, THAT JOCK STRAP, ANOTHER JOCK STRAP...
W-WAIT. IT'S NOT LIKE WE'VE OFFICIALLY BROKEN UP. I MEAN, IF HE CAME BACK...
BOING
I SHALL RID THE HOUSE OF THESE OBJECTS IMMEDIATELY!
SNAP
N-NO. WAIT.
MASAMITSU!! I'VE MADE A HUGE MISTA--
ガチャ
CLICK
ZAP
TAKUYA?!
SHOKK
......


SST
SST
SST
SST
OH, YOU ALREADY PACKED ALL MY STUFF. HAVE FUN WITH YOUR NEW BEEFCAKE! KTHXBYE. HA HA HA
SORRY TO BOTHER YOU.
Y-YOU GOT IT WRONG!! TAKUYA, WAIT! LET'S TALK!
PROBLEM SOLVED.
WHAT PART OF THAT WAS IN ANY WAY A RESOLUTION?!
KSS SS SS SS
PYUUN
AAAGGHHH! A SPIDER!!
GET RID OF IT!
(WE'LL FINISH OUR CHAT LATER)


AYE AYE!
KURU KURU KURU
ISS ISS
ZAN
SHOW ME WHAT YOU GOT, SPIDER!
STOP PLAYING...
WHAT ARE YOU, GANGNAM STYLE?
OH MY... THESE NEW ROOMMATES, MASAMITSU AND KANDAGAWA-KUN, HAVE JUST BEGUN A JOURNEY DOWN WHAT IS SURELY A ROCKY ROAD.
WITH SEVERAL MORE OBSTACLES AHEAD THAT HAVE BEEN DESTINED TO BRING THESE TWO TOGETHER.


THAT, HOWEVER, IS A STORY FOR ANOTHER TIME.


AND AS FOR MASAMITSU'S EX-BOYFRIEND, WHEN IT WAS REVEALED HE WAS DATING SEVERAL MEN AT ONCE, HE WAS DEALT A STEALTHY REVENGE. THESE DAYS, HE'S CURIOUSLY SELF-RESTRAINED. BUT THAT, TOO, IS A STORY FOR ANOTHER DAY.
HUH?

SEE YOU NEXT TIME

Kumada Poohsuke
熊田プウ助

Kumada Poohsuke's comics aren't always autobiographical, but they all tend to be unabashedly revealing. "I'm not embarrassed by anything I draw because I don't have a real talent for storytelling. I'll do anything for money," Poohsuke says with a laugh. He is one of the few artists we interviewed who is totally "out." Evidence of this level of transparency lies in the anecdotal memoir he'd just published when we met, where the artist recounts the total disclosure of all the quirks of his lifestyle... to his family. And rest assured, there are many quirky stories.

"I take a lot of cues from my personal life. I take note of them as they happen, and use them for my comics." He shares one direct-from-reality story that ran in a manga magazine: in the middle of giving someone an erotic crotch-shave, he suddenly recalled a tune by the 1970s female pop duo Pink Lady. Another time, he got so drunk at a bar that it was only when the bartender called him the next day to pick up the mankini he'd left behind that he realized he'd publicly disrobed the night before.

He dispenses these personal anecdotes with the deftness of a stand-up comedian, using them for social levity. His objective in this is always the same: to make readers laugh. "Making people laugh hysterically, making them laugh so hard they fall over themselves, makes me happiest," he says. But back to his coming out story, which he shared with us during an interview at the chain restaurant Jonathan's (think Denny's with a candy-striper motif). When Poohsuke was a preteen, his mother discovered gay drawings in a dresser, and his father commanded that he stop doing "this," to which Poohsuke casually replied, "What if I told you that you couldn't fuck women anymore?"

本日もおひとりホモ。
中年マンガ家生活
熊田プウ助
おひとりさま女子代表
いとうあさこ氏、大共感!!
「わかるぅ!」っていいたくないけど
……わかるぅ!
ぶんか社

Homo as Lonely as Always: Life of a Middle-Aged Manga Artist

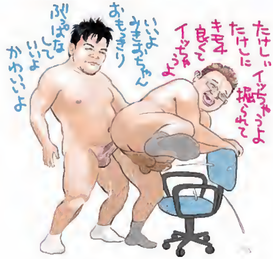
The comically precocious Poohsuke was raised on a steady diet of *shojo* manga—comics for girls, borrowed from an older sister and a cousin—which he credits with refining his own unique *gyagu komikku* style (*gyagu* is a romanization of "gag" and refers to humor comics as well as comic relief in serious manga). "I really liked *gyagu* manga because it was girls being funny with each other, and it fit my spirit in a way boys' manga didn't." In fact, he found it wasn't only girls' comics but women in theater that entertained him. He is a huge fan of the Takarazuka Revue, a storied all-female theater troupe in which women cross-dress to play male roles. Another major influence on Poohsuke is the gag comics maestro Yoshiko Tsuchida, "the only female assistant at [famous gag manga artist] Asatsuka Fujio's studio."

To elaborate on what draws him to girls' manga, he points out that *shojo*'s male counterpart, *shonen* manga, is typically more violent and agressive—themes toward which he never naturally gravitated. But gender proves to be much more

Photos from Kumada Poohsuke's Twitter feed

Kumada Poohsuke live-drawing with Okubo NEW

Portraits of Kumada Poohsuke by collaborator Samson Takahashi


たけしぃ イッちゃうよ
たけしに 掘られて
きもち良くて
イッちゃうよ
いいよ
みきおちゃん
おもきり
ぶっぱなして
いいよ
かわいいよ

complex than initially meets the eye in Poohsuke's manga world. He seems to take pleasure in exposing the comedy and hypocrisy of Japanese society's rigid gender norms. In his series of comic essays *Infiltration!! Inside the Man's Cave and the Woman's Garden*, Poohsuke tackles the mysteries of the sexes through pole dancing, wrestling, cruising the bathhouse, and cross-dressing. It is perhaps because of this ability to freely move between the masculine and the feminine that Poohsuke's books are marketed with endorsements by popular female TV personalities and comediennes.

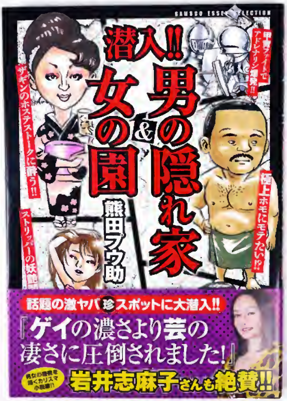
"I was teased as a kid for not acting manly or boyish enough," Poohsuke recalls. Today, the artist's veneer is at first glance quite masculine; with a beard and shaved head, Poohsuke sticks out in a Tokyo crowd. This outer peel of the artist's persona, however, becomes a canvas for Poohsuke to boldly decorate with makeup, women's clothing, fetish gear, and traditional Japanese attire. He performs these various gender guises in selfies and on stage. Alongside *mangaka* Okubo NEW, Poohsuke recently hosted a series of events at the "nocturnal" used bookstore Yoru no Hirune that incorporated live drawing into comedy and drag performance. Just as he's comfortable in the butch garb of a traditional Japanese laborer, Poohsuke feels right at home donning a skirt and a wig and performing a dance routine by J-pop group Perfume.

Not to mention he has starred in pornography, as well. "I wanted to do a more fetish-oriented video, because there aren't enough videos that go directly into it," he explains. "[Fetish] kind of bubbles up in Japanese gay porn, but there's nothing that approaches it directly. As a reference, I told the producers about Kink.com, an American fetish porn company." You could say Poohsuke is a multidisciplinary and equal opportunity fetishist. At one point he shows us a "fetish family tree" he's drawn, which encompasses everything from stockings, ski masks, and uniforms to sumo wrestlers and their loincloths. The base of this tree says simply, "I love fat guys."

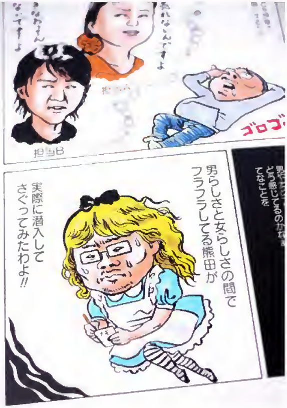
While internationally, the term *bara* has in one sense become synonymous with the type of fat guys Poohsuke adores, the artist typically associates the term "*bara* manga" with the more willowy men catered to and fawned over in what is now generally considered the phrase's namesake magazine, *Barazoku*. *Bara* denotes a feminine male body type and manga language he had never strongly identified with, even as a younger artist contributing work to that very magazine.

"*Bara* is not a term that's widely used in Japan, actually. Frankly, for the average gay Japanese person, the terms we use are more like *gachimuchi* (beefy) and *debu* (fat) or *gei* or *homo* manga but not *bara*, which means rose... But it's not problematic really. Americans can use it, and if it means something to them, that's great."

Poohsuke harbors nostalgia for a time that catered more toward his heterogeneous sexual proclivities. "I can't speak


SANSAO ESSAY SELECTION
潜入!!
男の隠れ家
&
女の園
熊田プウ助
甲冑ファイトでアドレナリン爆発!!
ザギンのホステストークに酔う!!
極上ホモにモテたい!?
ストリッパーの妖艶
話題の激ヤバ珍スポットに大潜入!!
『ゲイの濃さより芸の凄さに圧倒されました!』
男女の本質を描くカリスマ小説家!!
岩井志麻子さんも絶賛!!

Infiltration!! Inside the Man's Cave and the Woman's Garden (2013)


あれなんですよ
ゴロゴ
担当B
男らしさと女らしさの間でフラフラしてる熊田が
実際に潜入してさぐってみたわよ!!
どう感じてるのかな
てなことを

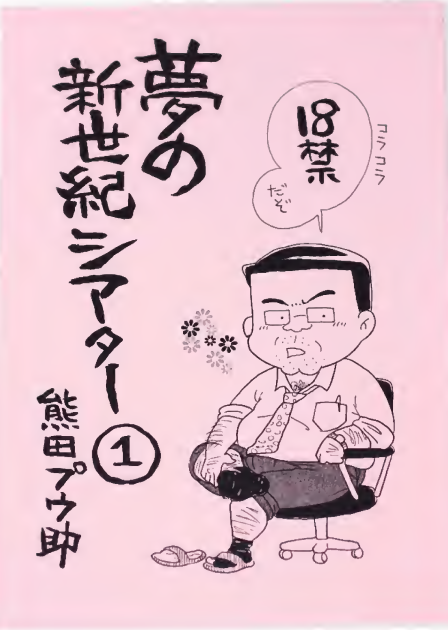
for the whole gay community, but gays in Japan are very compartmentalized and segregated. You go to one bar and it's femmes, and you go to another bar it's just fat guys. Even the cruising spots are like that. It's just one type of gay. When I go to some of these places, I find I'm talking to a very limited group of people. Before, it used to be more varied and diverse. There were different kinds of gays who'd get together, and the segmentation started around twenty years ago."

Though he can't pinpoint why the community became so fragmented, he does credit his personal growth and openness as a gay artist with his ability to have worked for himself most of his adult life. "I've always worked alone and don't have a day job where being out would be a problem. I'm not worrying about it because I don't have anyone to worry about!"

The *yonkoma* (4-panel) format Poohsuke is best known for has a deeply important role in Japanese society, not unlike the strip comics in our American newspapers. These are disposable anecdotes that have a cumulative effect. The short-form narrative gives its readers downright outrageous ideas of a fabulous life full of fetish mishaps, gay bar SNAFUs, and illicit office romances. Yet the stories are delivered with targeted precision, requiring the artist to piledrive readers from a mile in the air into a punchline that may amount to not much more than a well-placed breath, a word, or a pivot in eye contact.

Like most gay artists in Japan, Poohsuke earned his stripes working with magazines like *G-men*—in his case, over the course of some fifteen years. In fact, while we were interviewing him at the aforementioned Jonathan's, an editor from *G-men* spotted him and came over to inquire as to the status of a piece that hadn't been turned in yet. His deadline was apparently coming up quickly.

Like many of his peers, Poohsuke also draws self-published *doujinshi*. These days, though, he feels free to create manga on his terms, regardless of the outlet. "When I was younger, I was eager to take on any assignment, but now that I'm older and have worked with editors for the past fifteen years, they know my style, and I can choose what I want to draw. Today, I love everything I draw."

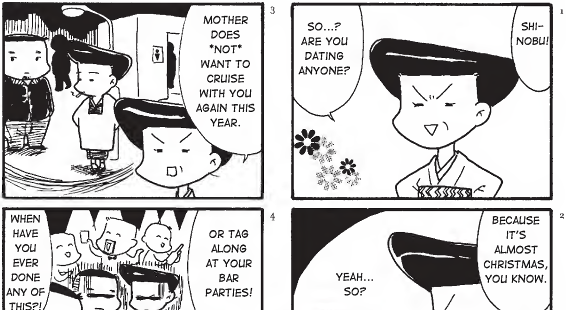

夢の新世紀シアター①
熊田プウ助
18禁だぞ
コラコラ

AN EXCERPT FROM

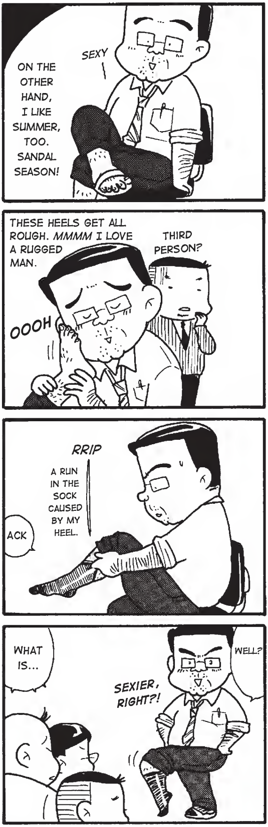
DREAMS OF THE NEW CENTURY THEATRE ISSUE #1

BY KUMADA POOHSUKE

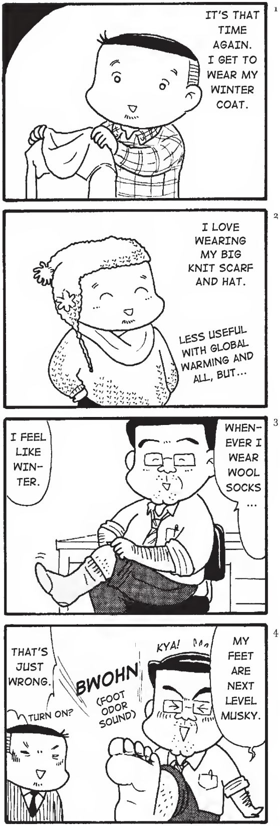
NOT THIS YEAR


1
SHI-NOBU!
SO...? ARE YOU DATING ANYONE?
2
BECAUSE IT'S ALMOST CHRISTMAS, YOU KNOW.
YEAH... SO?
3
MOTHER DOES *NOT* WANT TO CRUISE WITH YOU AGAIN THIS YEAR.
4
OR TAG ALONG AT YOUR BAR PARTIES!
WHEN HAVE YOU EVER DONE ANY OF THIS?!
YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN THIS YEAR!

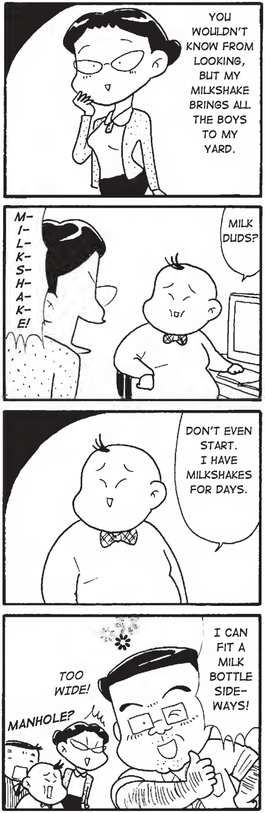
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FETISHIST


ON THE OTHER HAND, I LIKE SUMMER, TOO. SANDAL SEASON!
SEXY
THESE HEELS GET ALL ROUGH. MMMM I LOVE A RUGGED MAN.
THIRD PERSON?
OOOH
RRIP
A RUN IN THE SOCK CAUSED BY MY HEEL.
ACK
WHAT IS...
SEXIER, RIGHT?!
WELL?

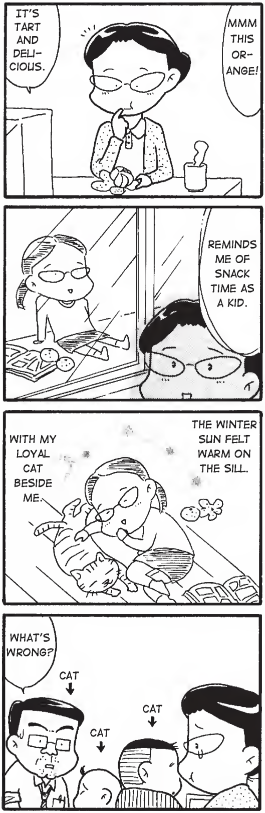
WINTER THRILLS


1
IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN. I GET TO WEAR MY WINTER COAT.
2
I LOVE WEARING MY BIG KNIT SCARF AND HAT.
LESS USEFUL WITH GLOBAL WARMING AND ALL, BUT...
3
WHENEVER I WEAR WOOL SOCKS...
I FEEL LIKE WINTER.
4
MY FEET ARE NEXT LEVEL MUSKY.
KYA!
BWOHN (FOOT ODOR SOUND)
THAT'S JUST WRONG.
TURN ON?

THAT'S NOT A COMPLIMENT.

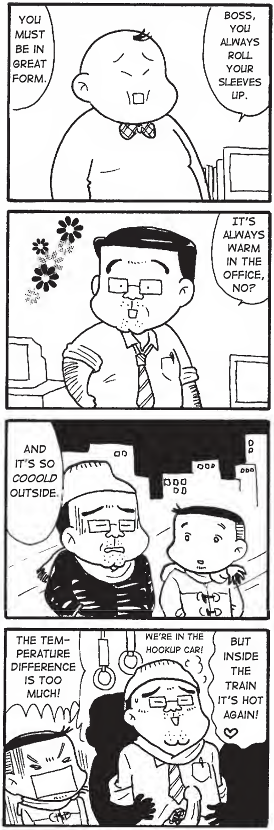

YOU WOULDN'T KNOW FROM LOOKING, BUT MY MILKSHAKE BRINGS ALL THE BOYS TO MY YARD.
MILK DUDS?
M-I-L-K-S-H-A-K-E!
DON'T EVEN START. I HAVE MILKSHAKES FOR DAYS.
I CAN FIT A MILK BOTTLE SIDEWAYS!
TOO WIDE!
MANHOLE?

AND NOW?

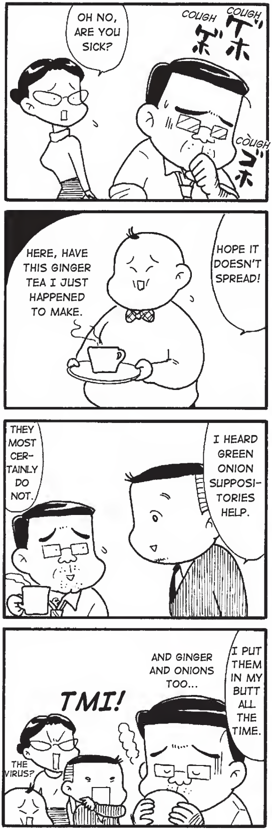

MMM THIS ORANGE!
IT'S TART AND DELICIOUS.
REMINDS ME OF SNACK TIME AS A KID.
THE WINTER SUN FELT WARM ON THE SILL.
WITH MY LOYAL CAT BESIDE ME.
WHAT'S WRONG?
CAT
CAT
CAT

CAT (*NEKO*) IS SLANG FOR A "BOTTOM"

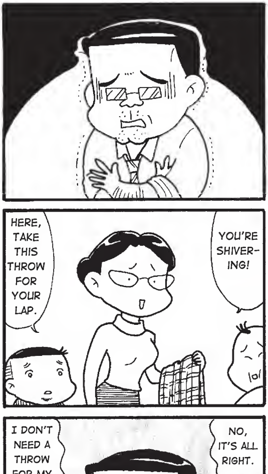
WINTER DREAMLAND


BOSS, YOU ALWAYS ROLL YOUR SLEEVES UP.
YOU MUST BE IN GREAT FORM.
IT'S ALWAYS WARM IN THE OFFICE, NO?
AND IT'S SO *COOOLD* OUTSIDE.
BUT INSIDE THE TRAIN IT'S HOT AGAIN! ♡
WE'RE IN THE HOOKUP CAR!
THE TEMPERATURE DIFFERENCE IS TOO MUCH!

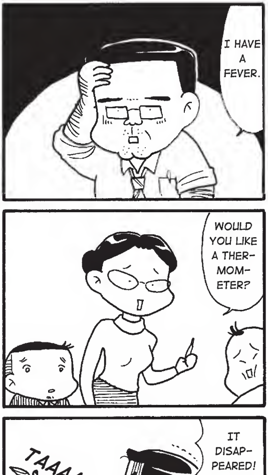
IN COMPLETE HEALTH...


COUGH ゲホ
COUGH ゴホ
OH NO, ARE YOU SICK?
COUGH ゴホ
HOPE IT DOESN'T SPREAD!
HERE, HAVE THIS GINGER TEA I JUST HAPPENED TO MAKE.
I HEARD GREEN ONION SUPPOSITORIES HELP.
THEY MOST CERTAINLY DO NOT.
I PUT THEM IN MY BUTT ALL THE TIME.
AND GINGER AND ONIONS TOO...
TMI!
THE VIRUS?

BREAKING FEVER

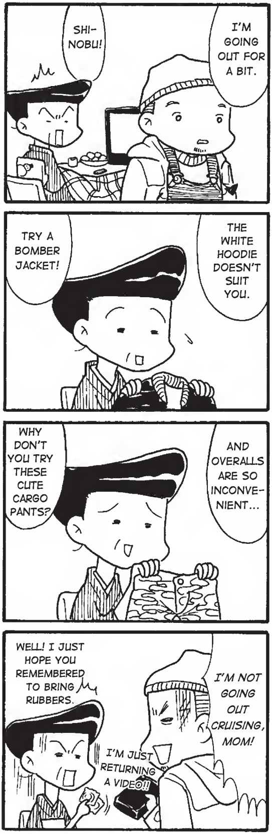

YOU'RE SHIVERING!
HERE, TAKE THIS THROW FOR YOUR LAP.
NO, IT'S ALL RIGHT.
I DON'T NEED A THROW FOR MY LAP...
YOU CAN COVER MY FACE WITH IT.
OR TIE UP MY LEGS. DON'T COVER THEM.
SO GOTH...
GO HOME ALREADY.

... AND THICKNESS

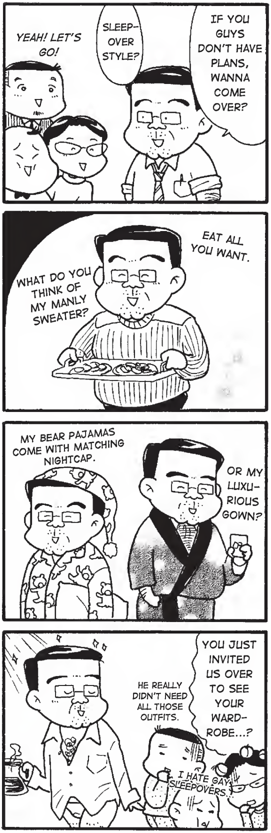

I HAVE A FEVER.
WOULD YOU LIKE A THERMOMETER?
IT DISAPPEARED! I CAN'T GET IT OUT!*
TAAAAA
COOKING THERMOMETERS ARE MUCH EASIER TO USE. ♡
GET ME BACK MINE, FIRST!

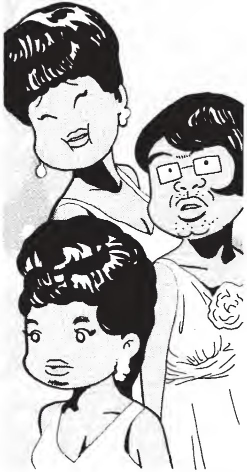
*AN UNUSUAL PUNCHLINE FOR A GAY MAGAZINE...

MAMA TOLD ME

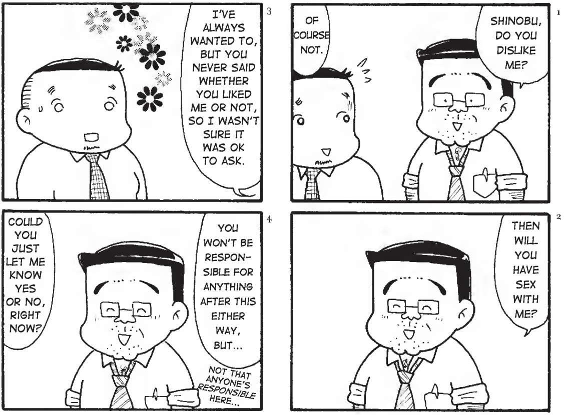

I'M GOING OUT FOR A BIT.
SHI-NOBU!
THE WHITE HOODIE DOESN'T SUIT YOU.
TRY A BOMBER JACKET!
AND OVERALLS ARE SO INCONVENIENT...
WHY DON'T YOU TRY THESE CUTE CARGO PANTS?
WELL! I JUST HOPE YOU REMEMBERED TO BRING RUBBERS.
I'M NOT GOING OUT CRUISING, MOM!
I'M JUST RETURNING A VIDEO!!

SOUR TIMES

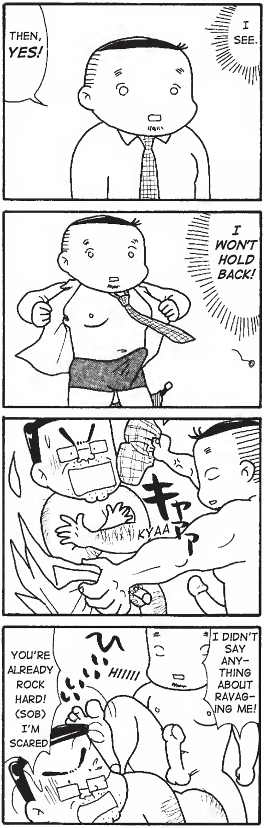

IF YOU GUYS DON'T HAVE PLANS, WANNA COME OVER?
SLEEP-OVER STYLE?
YEAH! LET'S GO!
EAT ALL YOU WANT.
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF MY MANLY SWEATER?
MY BEAR PAJAMAS COME WITH MATCHING NIGHTCAP.
OR MY LUXURIOUS GOWN?
YOU JUST INVITED US OVER TO SEE YOUR WARDROBE...?
HE REALLY DIDN'T NEED ALL THOSE OUTFITS.
I HATE GAY SLEEPOVERS.



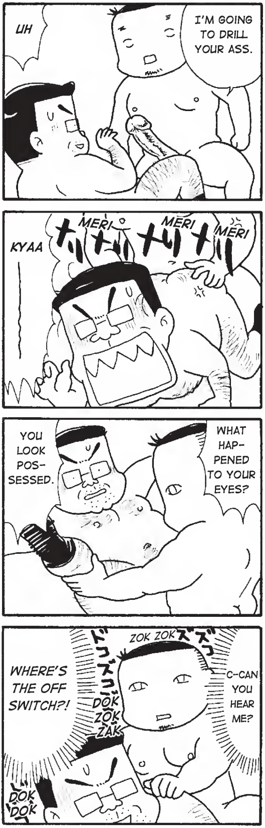
LIKE A FLOWER


1
SHINOBU, DO YOU DISLIKE ME?
OF COURSE NOT.
2
THEN WILL YOU HAVE SEX WITH ME?
3
I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO, BUT YOU NEVER SAID WHETHER YOU LIKED ME OR NOT, SO I WASN'T SURE IT WAS OK TO ASK.
4
YOU WON'T BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANYTHING AFTER THIS EITHER WAY, BUT...
NOT THAT ANYONE'S RESPONSIBLE HERE...
COULD YOU JUST LET ME KNOW YES OR NO, RIGHT NOW?

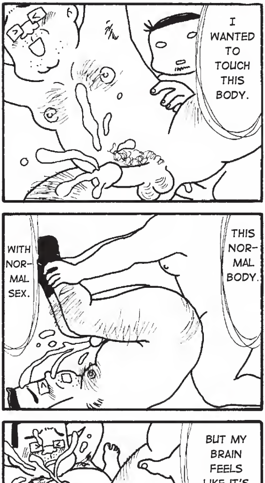
LET'S BE REAL


I SEE.
THEN, YES!
I WON'T HOLD BACK!
キャアア
KYAA
I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT RAVAGING ME!
ひぃぃ
HIIIII
YOU'RE ALREADY ROCK HARD! (SOB) I'M SCARED

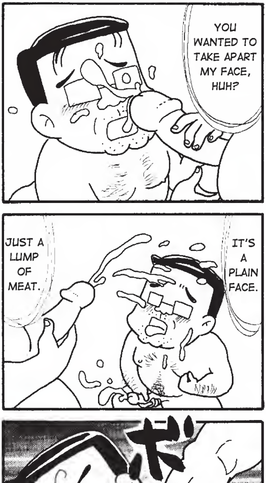
BOOM BOOM


I'M GOING TO DRILL YOUR ASS.
UH
MERI MERI MERI
KYAA
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR EYES?
YOU LOOK POSSESSED.
ZOK ZOK
C-CAN YOU HEAR ME?
DOK ZOK ZAK
WHERE'S THE OFF SWITCH?!
DOK DOK

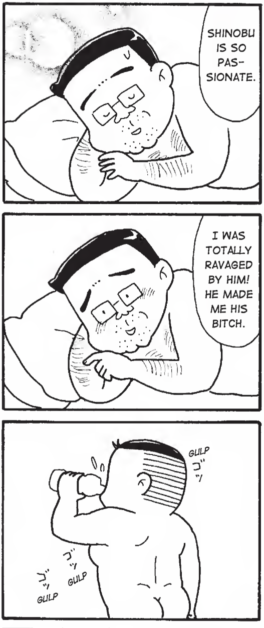
I'M HOME


I WANTED TO TOUCH THIS BODY.
THIS NORMAL BODY.
WITH NORMAL SEX.
BUT MY BRAIN FEELS LIKE IT'S MELTING!
Y-YOU'RE GOING TO KILL ME!
THIS KID IS WAY TOO PENT UP!

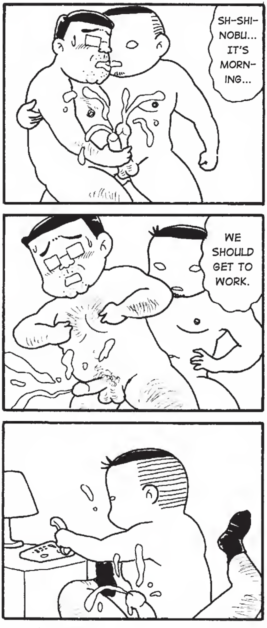
GOOD BOY.


YOU WANTED TO TAKE APART MY FACE, HUH?
IT'S A PLAIN FACE.
JUST A LUMP OF MEAT.
ボ
BOG
ケ
KYAA AA-
み
MEEE
WHAT THE... YOU'RE JUST A HARDCORE DOM?

NOT LIKE WE CAN STOP NOW.


SHINOBU IS SO PASSIONATE.
I WAS TOTALLY RAVAGED BY HIM! HE MADE ME HIS BITCH.
GULP
ゴッ
ゴッ
GULP
ゴッ
GULP
LET'S GO. AGAIN.
WAA NOT AGAIN. I HAVEN'T RECOVERED.
THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE THE WRAP UP!

PHONE LINE

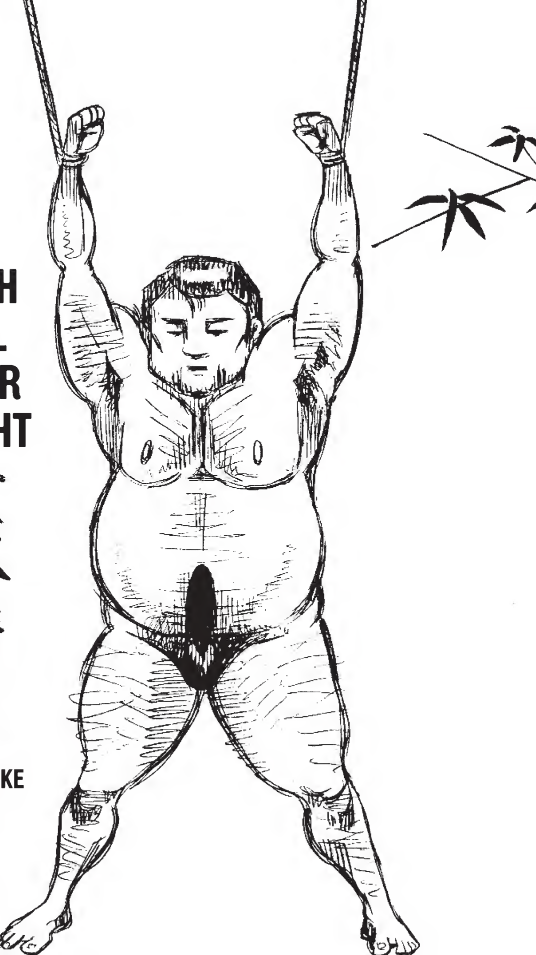

SH-SHINOBU... IT'S MORNING...
WE SHOULD GET TO WORK.
YOU'RE GOING TO CALL IN SICK FOR BOTH OF US.
YOU SOUND LIKE A KIDNAPPER.

WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT

一根清々

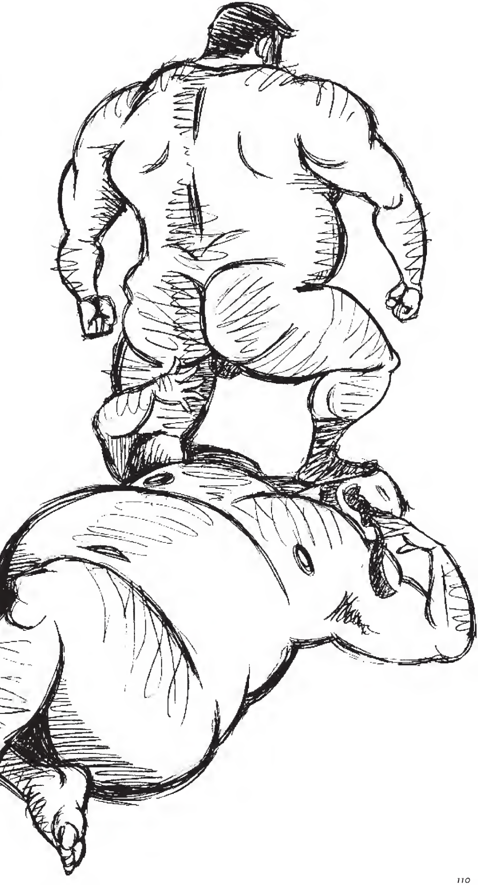
POOHSUKE

プウ節



香気馥郁

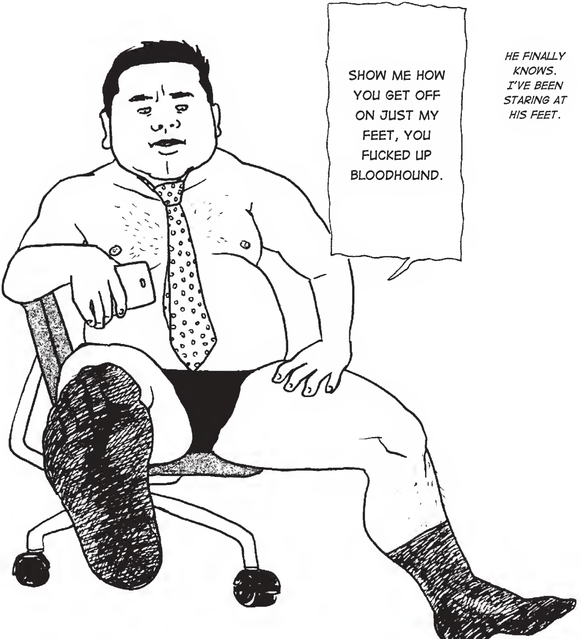
プゥ郎

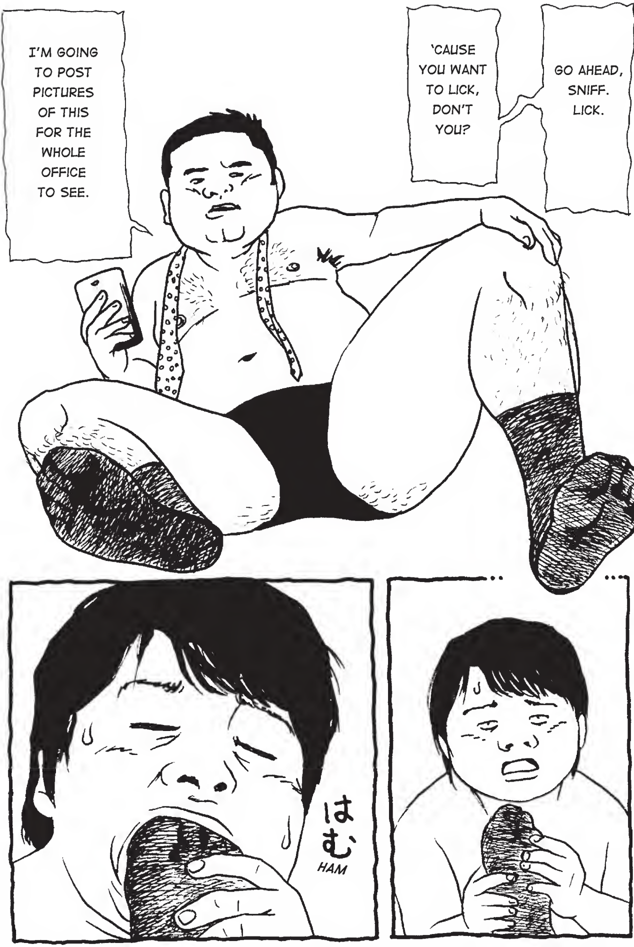


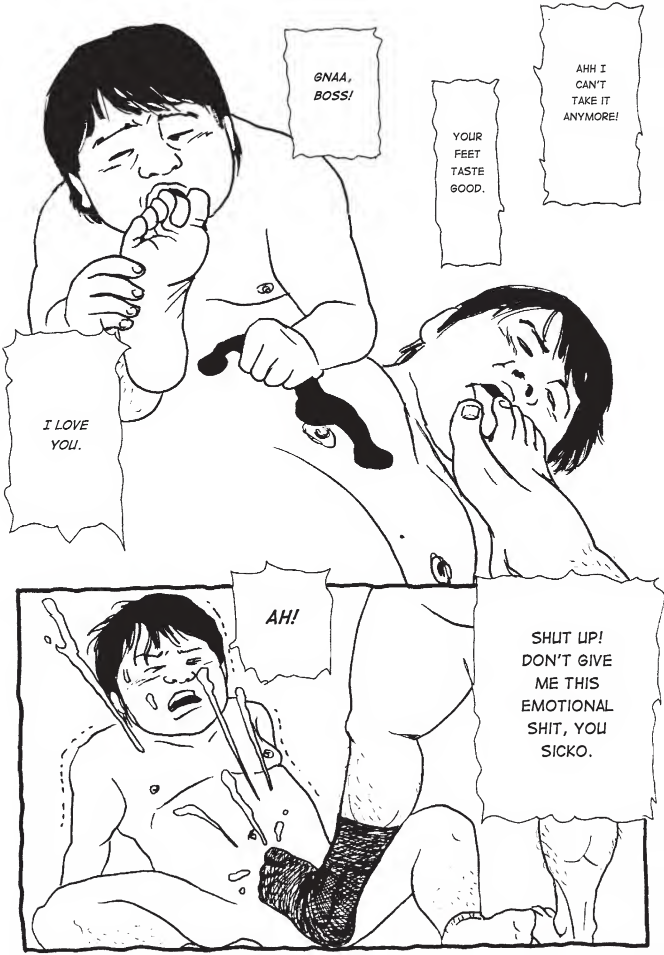
先輩とボクのはじめての黒ビジン

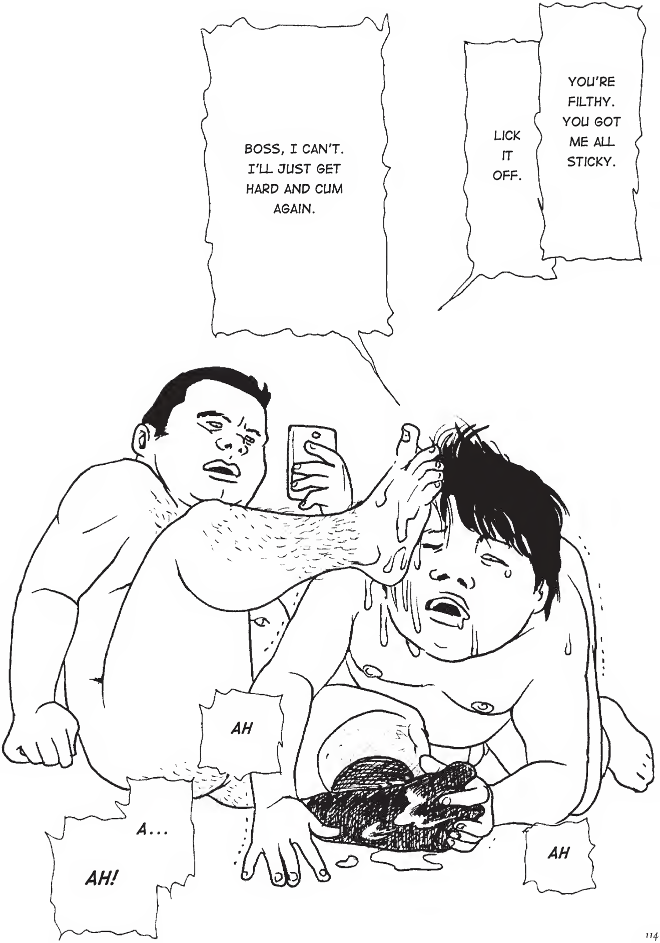
MY FIRST BLACK BEAUTY WITH THE BOSS.

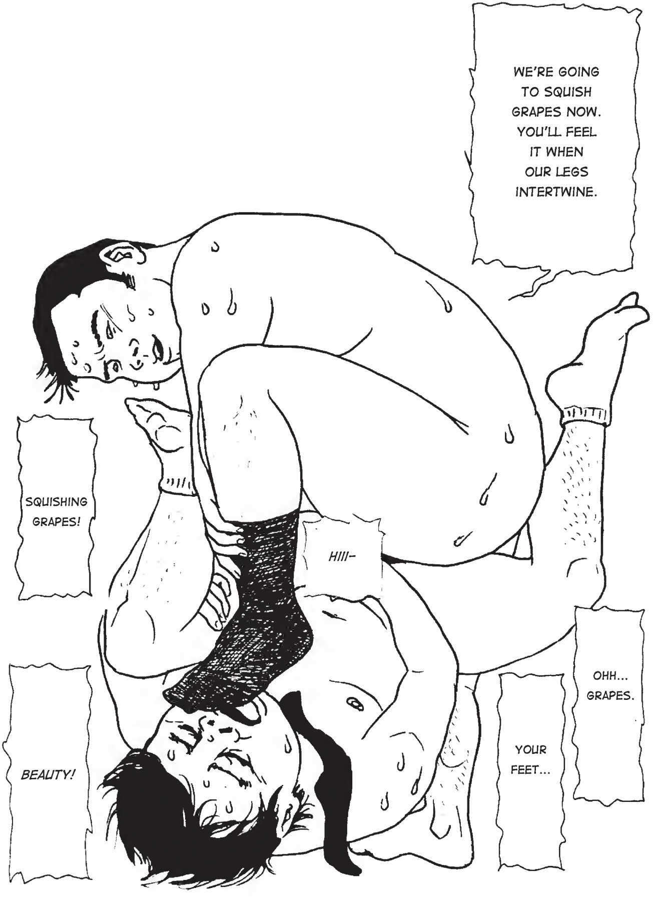
まんが・熊田プウ助
MANGA BY KUMADA POOHSUKE

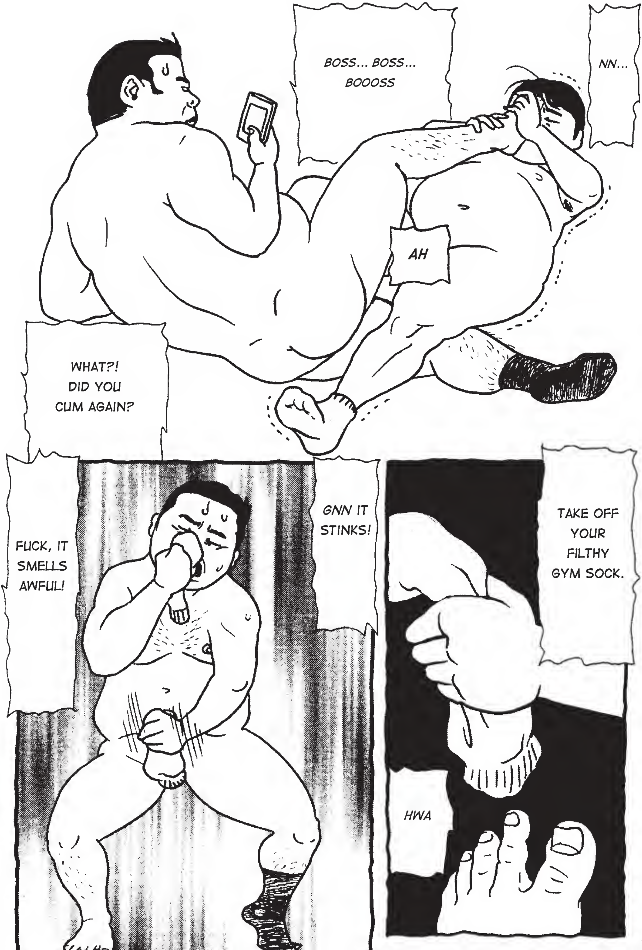

HE FINALLY KNOWS. I'VE BEEN STARING AT HIS FEET.
SHOW ME HOW YOU GET OFF ON JUST MY FEET, YOU FUCKED UP BLOODHOUND.

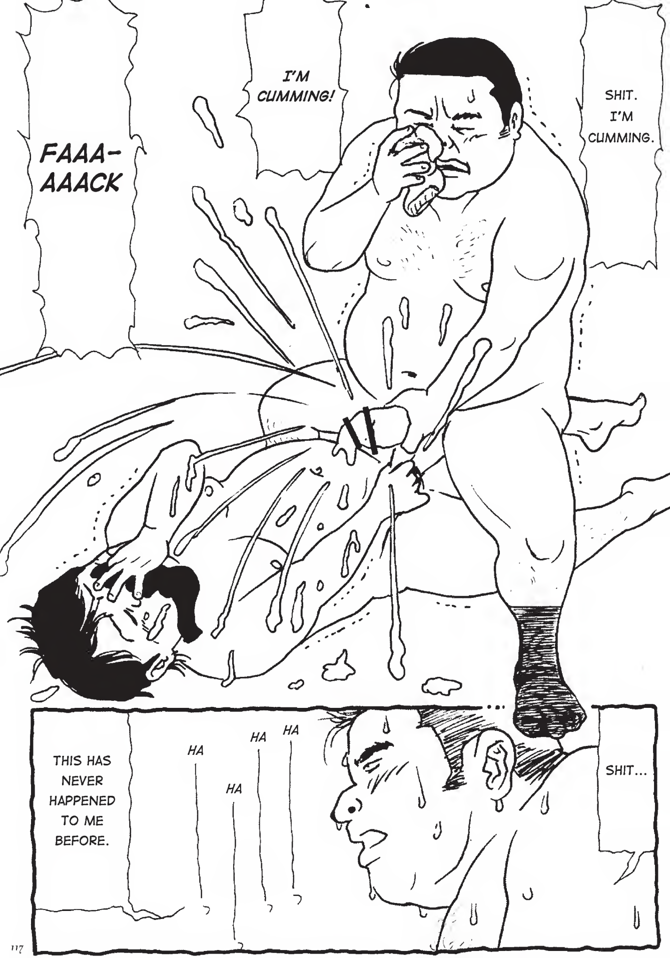

GO AHEAD, SNIFF. LICK.
'CAUSE YOU WANT TO LICK, DON'T YOU?
I'M GOING TO POST PICTURES OF THIS FOR THE WHOLE OFFICE TO SEE.
……
はむ
HAM

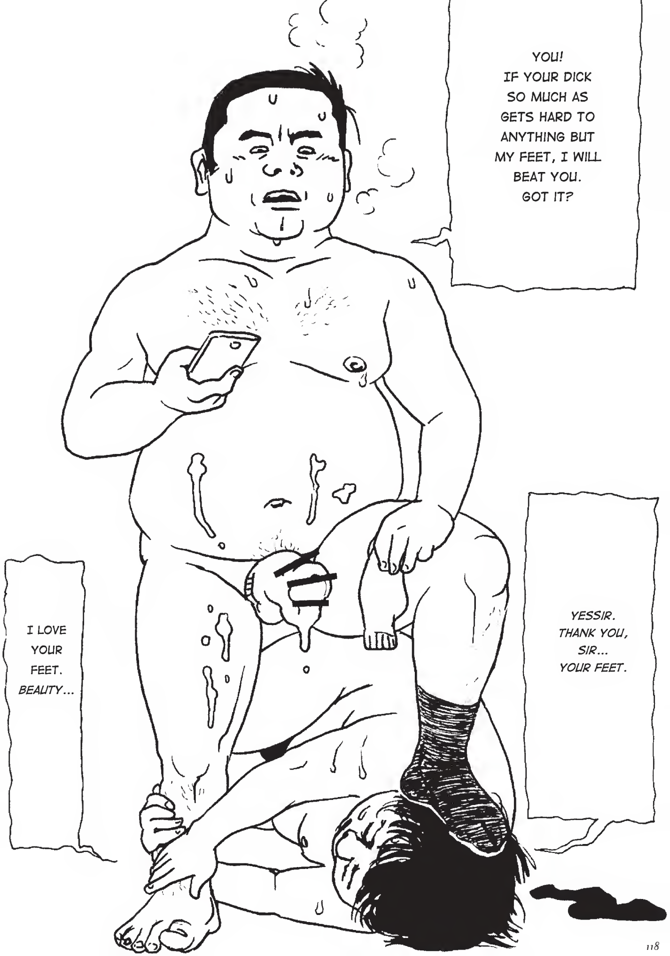

AHH I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE!
YOUR FEET TASTE GOOD.
GNAA, BOSS!
I LOVE YOU.
SHUT UP! DON'T GIVE ME THIS EMOTIONAL SHIT, YOU SICKO.
AH!


YOU'RE FILTHY. YOU GOT ME ALL STICKY.
LICK IT OFF.
BOSS, I CAN'T. I'LL JUST GET HARD AND CUM AGAIN.
AH
AH
A...
AH!


WE'RE GOING TO SQUISH GRAPES NOW. YOU'LL FEEL IT WHEN OUR LEGS INTERTWINE.
HIII-
SQUISHING GRAPES!
OHH... GRAPES.
YOUR FEET...
BEAUTY!


NN...
BOSS... BOSS... BOOOSS
AH
WHAT?! DID YOU CUM AGAIN?
TAKE OFF YOUR FILTHY GYM SOCK.
HWA
GNN IT STINKS!
FUCK, IT SMELLS AWFUL!


SHIT. I'M CUMMING.
I'M CUMMING!
FAAAA-AAACK
SHIT...
HA
HA
HA
HA
THIS HAS NEVER HAPPENED TO ME BEFORE.


YOU! IF YOUR DICK SO MUCH AS GETS HARD TO ANYTHING BUT MY FEET, I WILL BEAT YOU. GOT IT?
YESSIR. THANK YOU, SIR... YOUR FEET.
I LOVE YOUR FEET. *BEAUTY...*

Takeshi Matsu
松武

"I started drawing gay manga when I was around thirty," Takeshi Matsu reminisces. "I had been doing *shonen* manga for boys, but there were things I wanted to write that the editors just weren't into." Luckily for us, Takeshi Matsu found navigating the world of *shonen* frustrating, unfulfilling, and full of stifling bureaucratic demands.

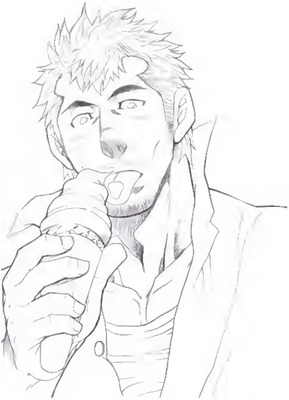
"It wasn't really that they were prohibiting me from doing gay content; it was just my frustration with the editors," he explains. "In the magazine world, editors give their artists specific prompts, and then you expand upon them. Then the editors go through it and tell you what doesn't work, or whatever. I just got really tired of the whole process." After Takeshi Matsu won an award for his work, a *shonen* editor became his representative—which led to even more scrutiny and micromanagement. "I basically followed the orders, and they still dropped me. They didn't run my work."

Takeshi Matsu finds much more freedom in writing gay-themed work. "I like the editors in the gay manga world better, but especially the editor I was working with at *Kinnuku-Otoko*." Literally, "Muscleman," *Kinnuku-Otoko* was a magazine dedicated to muscular men, marketed to both men and women, which operated briefly in the early 2000s. Gengoroh Tagame credits the publication with helping bridge the gap between BL and gay manga, bringing together a roster of female and male *mangaka* with a shared interest in homoeroticism. It was in this gender-balanced climate that Takeshi Matsu flourished as an artist. "I decided to give gay manga a go, so I sent in a story to *Kinnuku-Otoko*. They liked it and picked it up. That's sort of how I started. That was called *Ureshii Yatsura*, which is like, 'Happy Guys.'"

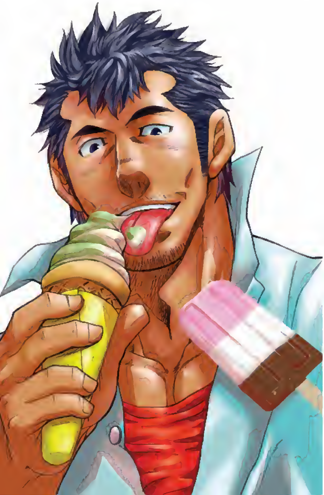
"Happy guys" may as well be Takeshi Matsu's thesis statement. Although his characters may be portrayed as anxious, embarrassed, or self-doubting, these feelings are usually internal stumbling blocks on the path to love. "There's one piece Jiraiya did," Takeshi Matsu mentions, commenting on the *mangaka*'s early influence on his work. "In the afterword, he said, 'The world is full of so much sadness, and I want to write happy endings.' I felt very moved by that statement. I find that in my writing, too, I want to end on a good note."

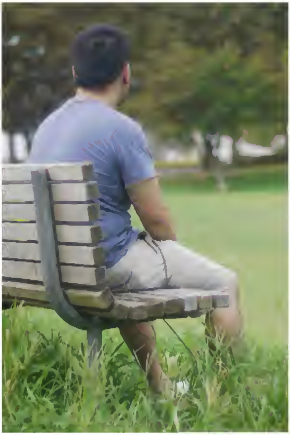
Takeshi Matsu was well versed in the work of Jiraiya and Tagame by the time he started making manga. "I was reading *G-men*, *Badi*, *Barazoku*—the usual suspects—in high school. *[Laughs]* So, I'd read those manga when I started, for sure."

Growing up in a village of around one thousand people "in the middle of nowhere," Takeshi Matsu felt coming out was simply an impossibility. Encountering gay manga in high school presented him with another path in life. "I was really shocked at how impressive it was, and how different it was. I thought this was a niche, but these people were clearly doing well in it."



Sketch and final illustration for the cover of *Shouka Dou* #7 (2012), collaborative *doujinshi* by Takeshi Matsu and Tsukasa Matsuzaki





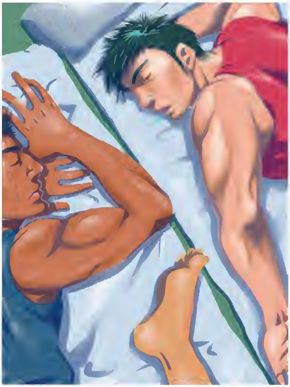
After trying his hand at gay manga, Takeshi Matsu quickly became one of those selfsame artists doing well in the genre. It wasn't long before he was able to pay the bills drawing smiling men in briefs and leave his day job at a bank behind. Takeshi Matsu has had a devoted following since the beginning of his career, which has been both a blessing and a curse for the artist. "When I first started publishing comics, there were pirated versions immediately," he says. "But it was print: people would simply copy, staple, and distribute it. So I thought, well, there are only so many pieces of pirated print comics a person can make. I thought it was fine, because it spread the word about my work."

It wasn't long before widespread digital piracy hit manga, affecting even the most niche genres with sweeping speed. Manga that Takeshi Matsu had been commissioned to write would be scanned and posted the day of the magazine's release. "That kind of shocked me. I thought, 'Well that sucks, but it's probably not a lot of my work.' But then to find out that it's *all* of my work? All of my manga has been digitally pirated, and that's not cool. I know for a fact that people are going to see these digital versions and then not buy print books, and that makes me a little upset. But you know, of course, I can tell people to stop, and if they do, they're just going to pirate somebody else's work. I would just like them to know that people actually have to live off this. People have to make their living off of drawing, and if I can't make money off of that, it just makes me not want to draw, frankly. It's kind of depressing."

It's up to the artists to speak up for themselves on the subject of piracy, Takeshi Matsu says. "And the editors and the publishers also have to speak up and defend us. When I look at the comments on a lot of these piracy sites, I think some of these people have no idea it's actually illegal. If more people were aware of the impact this had on us, economically, they would stop. I think that awareness needs to happen."

Takeshi Matsu's manga-writing process begins with the characters. "I start to think of dialogue, and then I make a note of it, and that's usually where I start. What kind of people would be having this conversation? I like writing energetic characters, and that's especially because of my background in *shonen* manga as well. I write people looking forward, or moving forward." Physically, they're often muscular and lanky with short spiky hair, but it's not all alpha-males in Takeshi Matsu's world.

He describes a work in progress in which a "big popular guy" instigates a dick-measuring contest with a (ahem, generously endowed) "wimpy morose kid," as pretense for the popular kid to confess his homosexuality. "You know, I draw big guys, but I'm kind of more into the morose kid. The sort of skinny guy with glasses – I kind of have a glasses fetish." Takeshi Matsu draws big guys because, he says matter-of-factly, "that's what everyone wants to see. I guess it's just something in the air. Bigger guys are more manly." Takeshi Matsu is a professional with an astute understanding of the mechanisms by which the gay manga market works.

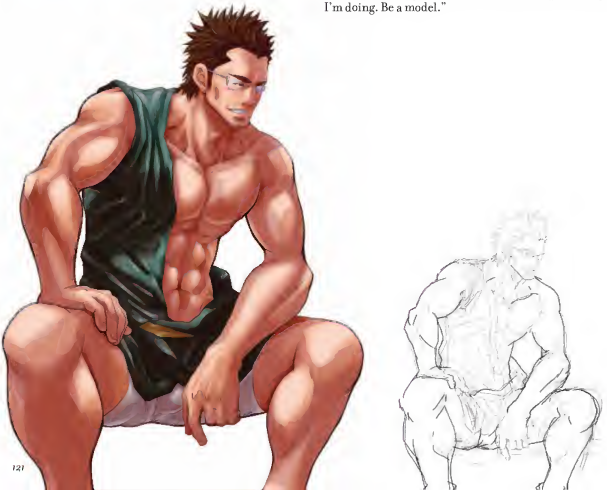


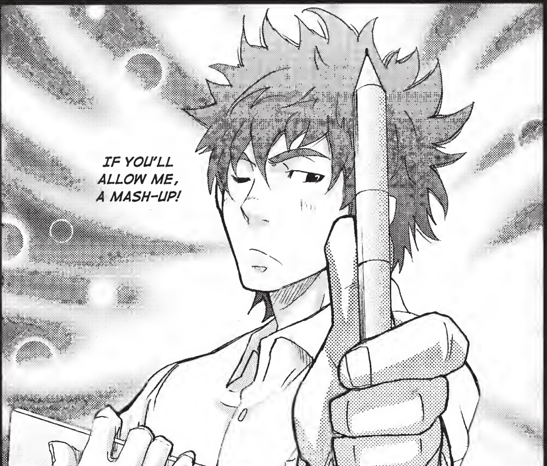
Above: *Zakonekan* (2014)
Below: Illustration and sketch for the cover of *Shouka Dou* #5 (2010)

"I only write erotic content right now. The editors actually tell me how many sex scenes need to be in my stories. So I accommodate. But if it's a love story, then it's going to be a different kind of sex than if it's just a hookup or whatever." It isn't that Takeshi Matsu wouldn't make his manga erotic, given the choice—as evidenced by the sexuality happily radiating from his self-published *doujinshi*. "I still want *readers*," he says, smiling, "and they're picking it up because there's erotica in it." It's simply what the fanbase expects.

Matsu doesn't talk about his artwork much with friends, and never with his family. "I don't feel like I'm trapped in the closet," he says. "Everybody knows I'm gay, I have gay friends—it's just my family. Actually, my dad knows I'm gay. He found out because he found my books. He said, 'Oh, what's this all about?' and I kind of said, 'Well, I'm not into women. I'm not going to get married and make you kids and stuff.' I treated it very coolly and logically, and my dad was very neutral about it. He said, 'Just don't tell your mom.' I've wanted to tell her, but I think he's right, and I'm not going to do that to them." For this reason, Matsu keeps a low profile.

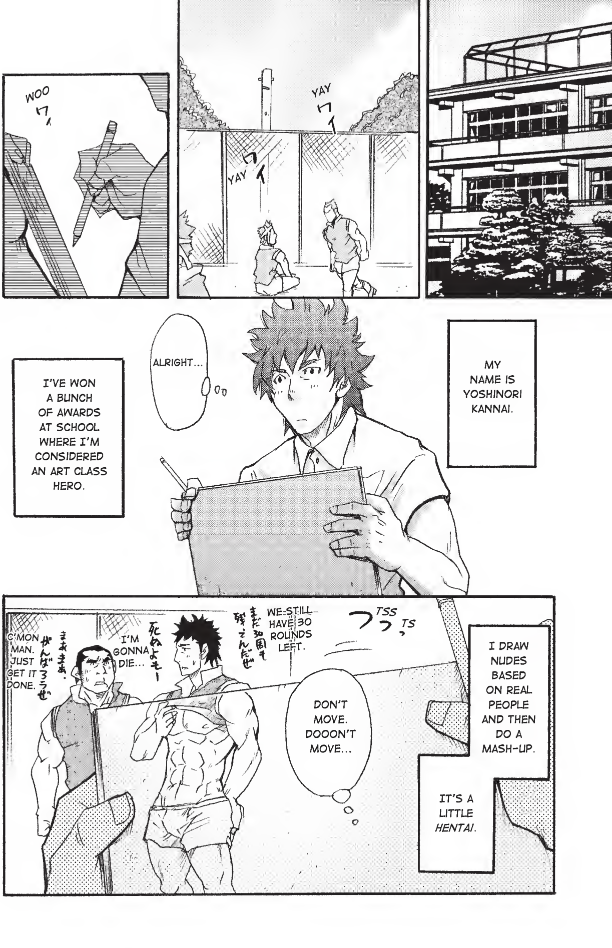
Looking forward, Matsu says he hopes more of his work will be officially translated into English. He wants to keep doing what he's doing, so he can serve as inspiration. "You know, there are a lot of really talented younger gay manga artists out there right now, but they're choosing not to make full careers of it. They're doing it on the side as a hobby. I think it'd be great if they could make careers out of it, do more formal publishing. To that end, I want to keep on doing what I'm doing. Be a model."

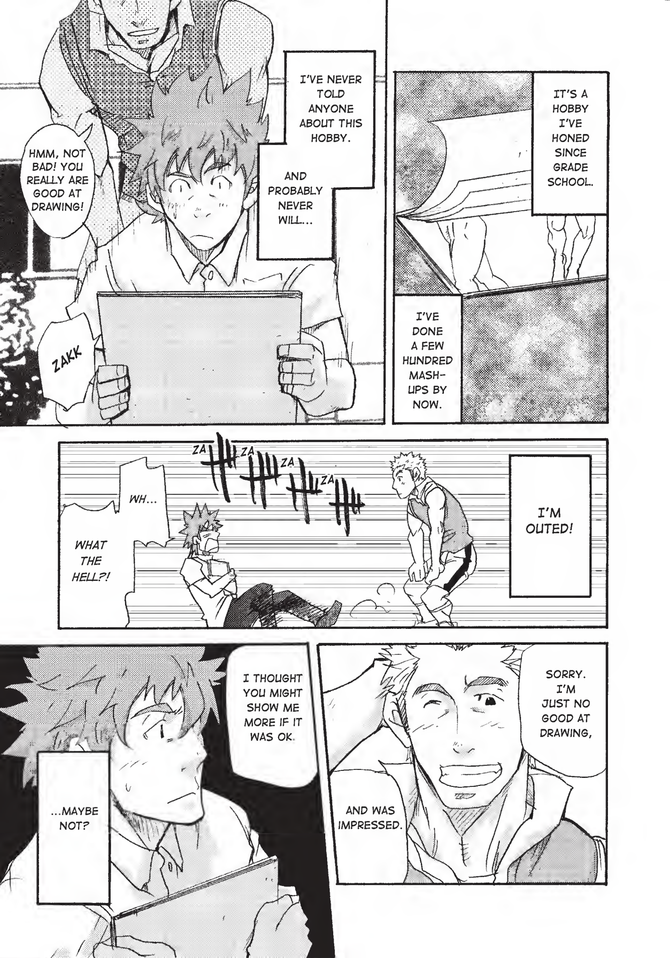


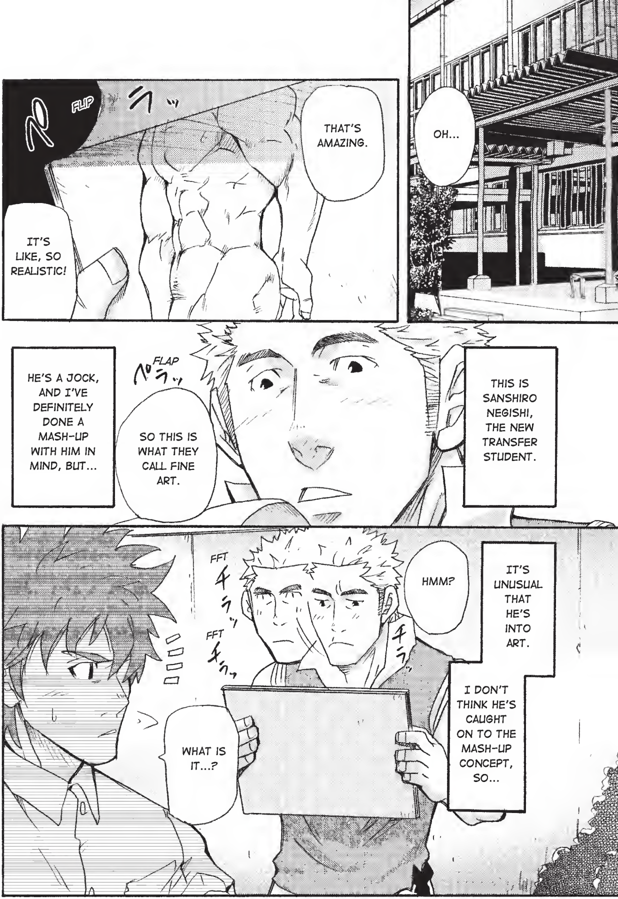

IF YOU'LL ALLOW ME, A MASH-UP!

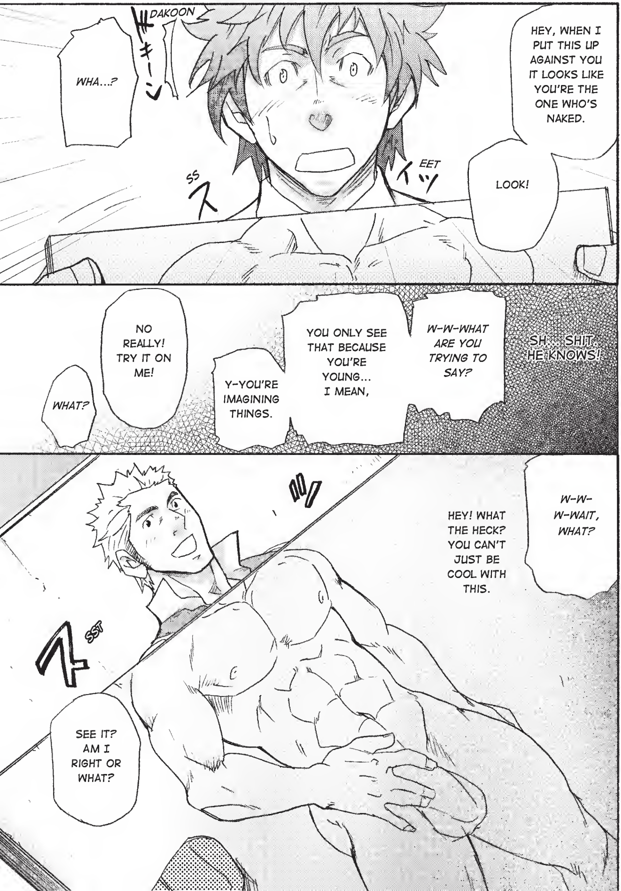
KANNAI'S DILEMMA

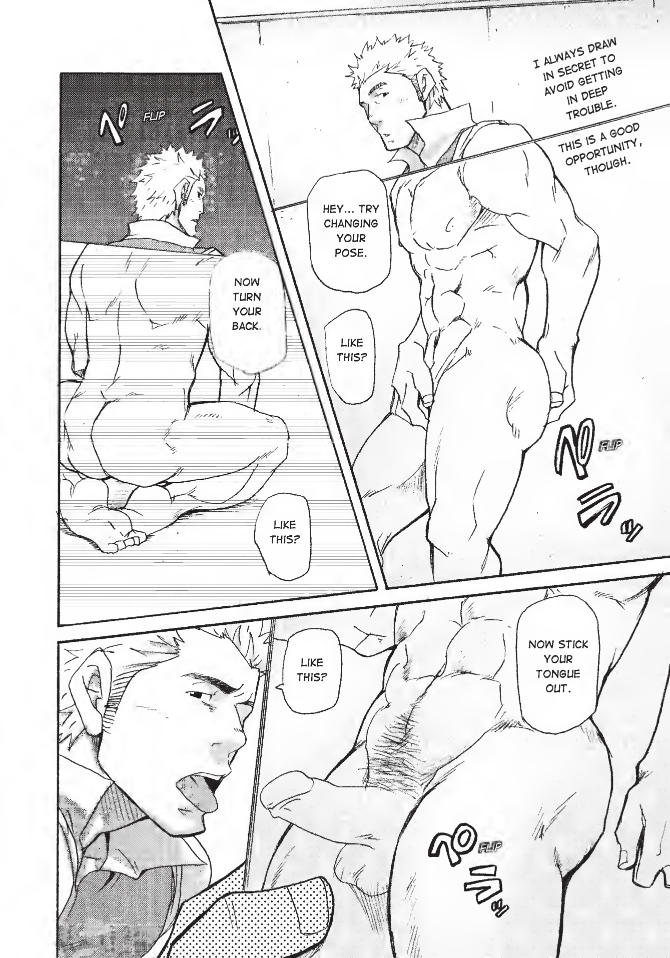
BY TAKESHI MATSU

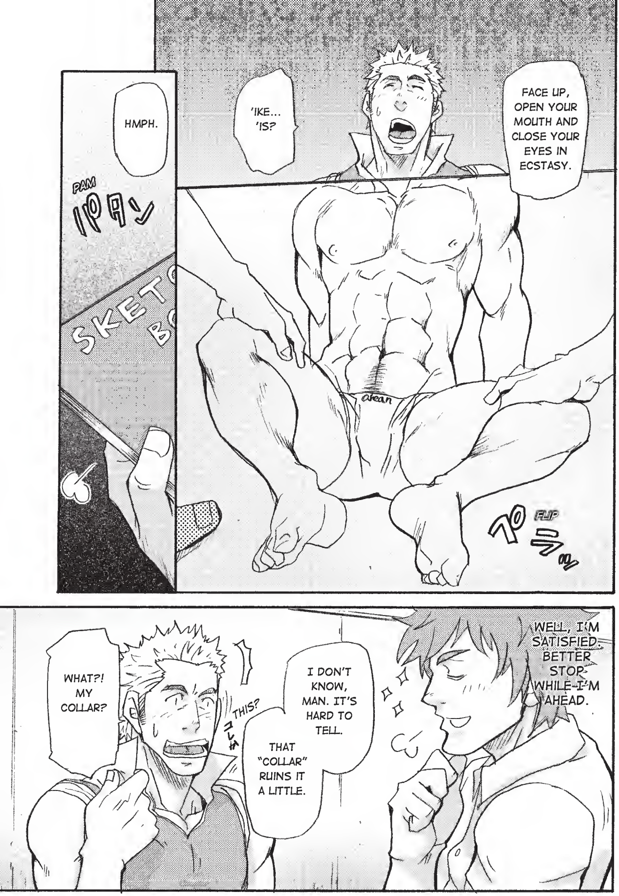

YAY ワイ
YAY ワイ
WOO ワイ
MY NAME IS YOSHINORI KANNAI.
ALRIGHT...
I'VE WON A BUNCH OF AWARDS AT SCHOOL WHERE I'M CONSIDERED AN ART CLASS HERO.
I DRAW NUDES BASED ON REAL PEOPLE AND THEN DO A MASH-UP.
IT'S A LITTLE *HENTAI*.
TSS ツ TS つっ
DON'T MOVE. DOOON'T MOVE...
WE STILL HAVE 30 ROUNDS LEFT. まだ30周も残ってんだぜ
I'M GONNA DIE... 死ぬよもー
C'MON MAN. JUST GET IT DONE. まあまあ、がんばろうぜ

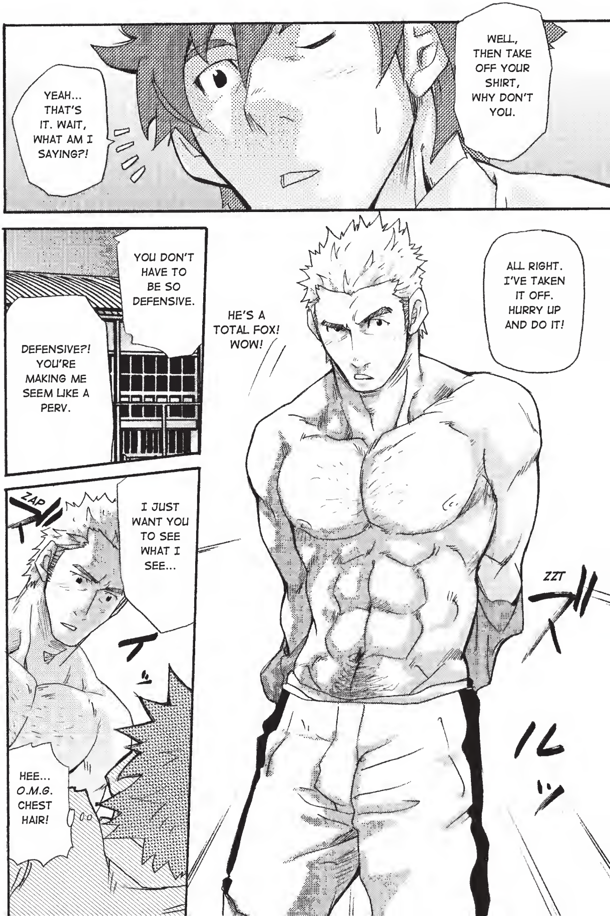

IT'S A HOBBY I'VE HONED SINCE GRADE SCHOOL.
I'VE DONE A FEW HUNDRED MASH-UPS BY NOW.
I'VE NEVER TOLD ANYONE ABOUT THIS HOBBY.
AND PROBABLY NEVER WILL...
HMM, NOT BAD! YOU REALLY ARE GOOD AT DRAWING!
ZAKK
I'M OUTED!
ZA
ZA
ZA
ZA
WH...
WHAT THE HELL?!
SORRY. I'M JUST NO GOOD AT DRAWING,
AND WAS IMPRESSED.
I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT SHOW ME MORE IF IT WAS OK.
...MAYBE NOT?

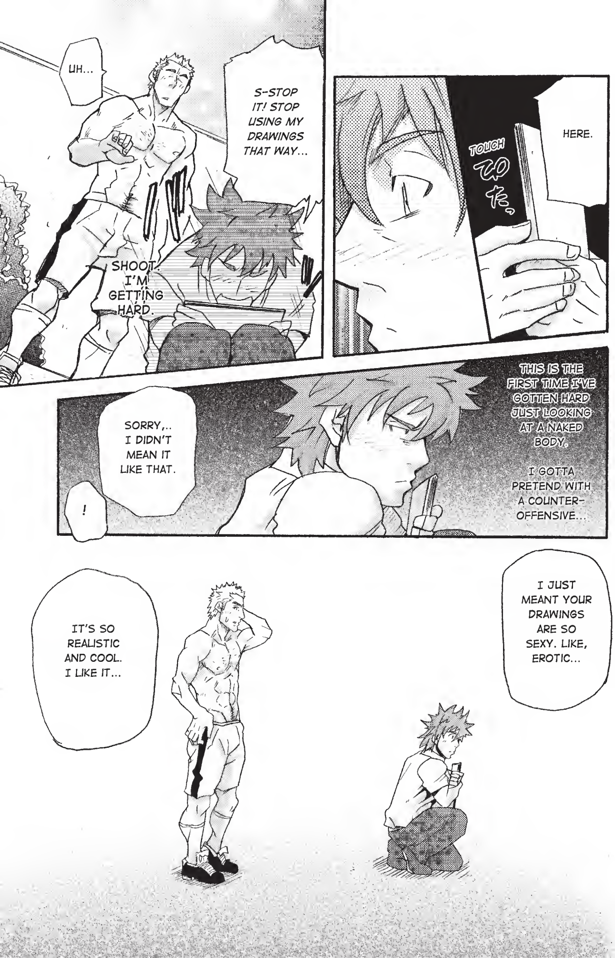

OH...
THAT'S AMAZING.
ペラッ
FLIP
IT'S LIKE, SO REALISTIC!
THIS IS SANSHIRO NEGISHI, THE NEW TRANSFER STUDENT.
ペラッ
FLAP
SO THIS IS WHAT THEY CALL FINE ART.
HE'S A JOCK, AND I'VE DEFINITELY DONE A MASH-UP WITH HIM IN MIND, BUT...
IT'S UNUSUAL THAT HE'S INTO ART.
I DON'T THINK HE'S CAUGHT ON TO THE MASH-UP CONCEPT, SO...
HMM?
チラ
FFT
チラッ
FFT
チラッ
WHAT IS IT...?

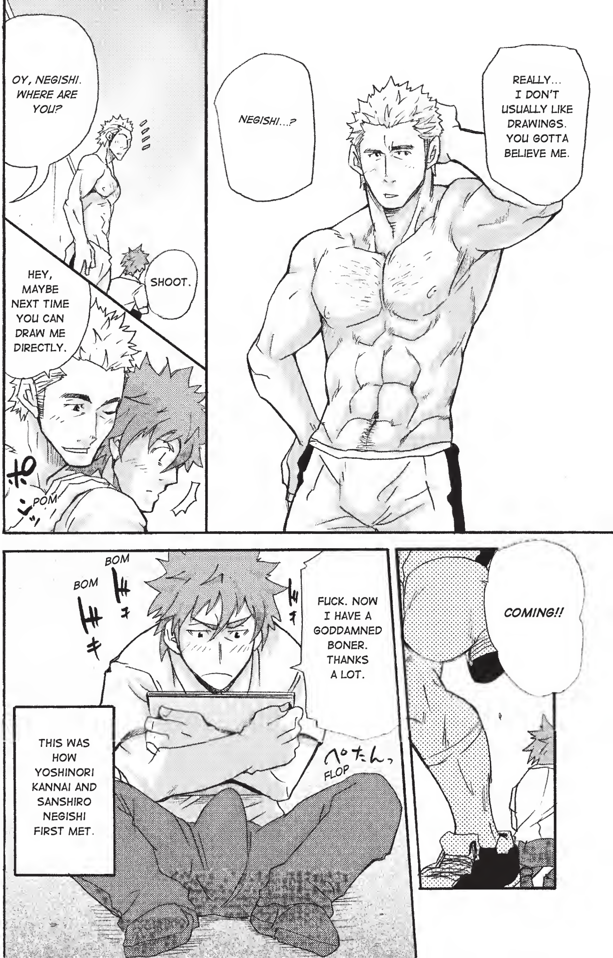

HEY, WHEN I PUT THIS UP AGAINST YOU IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S NAKED.
LOOK!
イッ EET
ス SS
DAKOON
WHA...?
SH... SHIT. HE KNOWS!
W-W-WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?
YOU ONLY SEE THAT BECAUSE YOU'RE YOUNG... I MEAN,
Y-YOU'RE IMAGINING THINGS.
NO REALLY! TRY IT ON ME!
WHAT?
W-W-W-WAIT, WHAT?
HEY! WHAT THE HECK? YOU CAN'T JUST BE COOL WITH THIS.
SST
SEE IT? AM I RIGHT OR WHAT?


I ALWAYS DRAW IN SECRET TO AVOID GETTING IN DEEP TROUBLE.
THIS IS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY, THOUGH.
HEY... TRY CHANGING YOUR POSE.
LIKE THIS?
ペラッ
FLIP
ペラッ
FLIP
NOW TURN YOUR BACK.
LIKE THIS?
NOW STICK YOUR TONGUE OUT.
LIKE THIS?
ペラッ
FLIP

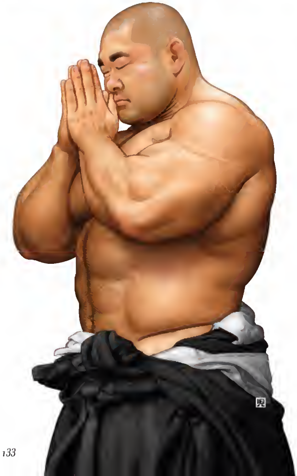

FACE UP, OPEN YOUR MOUTH AND CLOSE YOUR EYES IN ECSTASY.
'IKE... 'IS?
FLIP
HMPH.
PAM
パタン
SKETC BO
WELL, I'M SATISFIED. BETTER STOP WHILE I'M AHEAD.
I DON'T KNOW, MAN. IT'S HARD TO TELL.
THAT "COLLAR" RUINS IT A LITTLE.
THIS?
コレ
WHAT?! MY COLLAR?


WELL, THEN TAKE OFF YOUR SHIRT, WHY DON'T YOU.
YEAH... THAT'S IT. WAIT, WHAT AM I SAYING?!
ALL RIGHT. I'VE TAKEN IT OFF. HURRY UP AND DO IT!
HE'S A TOTAL FOX! WOW!
ZZT
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE SO DEFENSIVE.
DEFENSIVE?! YOU'RE MAKING ME SEEM LIKE A PERV.
ZAP
I JUST WANT YOU TO SEE WHAT I SEE...
HEE... O.M.G. CHEST HAIR!


HERE.
TOUCH
ぴたっ
S-STOP IT! STOP USING MY DRAWINGS THAT WAY...
UH...
SHOOT. I'M GETTING HARD.
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE GOTTEN HARD JUST LOOKING AT A NAKED BODY.
I GOTTA PRETEND WITH A COUNTER-OFFENSIVE...
SORRY,.. I DIDN'T MEAN IT LIKE THAT.
!
I JUST MEANT YOUR DRAWINGS ARE SO SEXY. LIKE, EROTIC...
IT'S SO REALISTIC AND COOL. I LIKE IT...


REALLY... I DON'T USUALLY LIKE DRAWINGS. YOU GOTTA BELIEVE ME.
NEGISHI...?
OY, NEGISHI. WHERE ARE YOU?
SHOOT.
HEY, MAYBE NEXT TIME YOU CAN DRAW ME DIRECTLY.
ポンッ
POM
COMING!!
FUCK. NOW I HAVE A GODDAMNED BONER. THANKS A LOT.
BOM
BOM
ぺたんっ
FLOP
THIS WAS HOW YOSHINORI KANNAI AND SANSHIRO NEGISHI FIRST MET.

Below: Illustration for GG Group (2014)



Jiraiya
児雷也

"I like men with big bodies," says the artist known as Jiraiya. "Not just visible largeness but like, if I hold someone and my hands can't reach all the way around... *that* big. That *real* bigness is important."

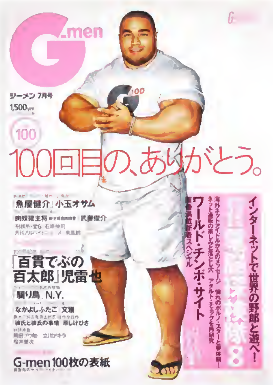
From the hypertrophied, hyperreal digital flesh of the men in his illustrations to the simple lines that contain his mammoth manga characters, everything Jiraiya commits to paper or pixel has an erotic, joyful heft to it. Size, Jiraiya says, is what motivates him to draw. "I was actually just talking to Tagame-san about this, but I have *always* idealized massiveness," he tells us. "I was sort of feeble as a child. My body was weak, so I was obsessed with the idea of strong men."

Born in 1967, Jiraiya grew up in a less developed Japan that, he remembers, "was a country trying to avoid poverty. Fatness signified wealth." Sumo wrestlers and pro wrestlers were gods to a young Jiraiya. "Parents, relatives, neighbors constantly told me I was a weak, small kid. And I was eating properly, you know. It was stressful." These days, Jiraiya is neither weak nor small and takes a certain pleasure in displaying his own physical strength: "I have this thing about cradling people. If I can't cradle carry you, I'm floored. I can lift someone who weighs up to one hundred kilograms, you know. I do get turned on."

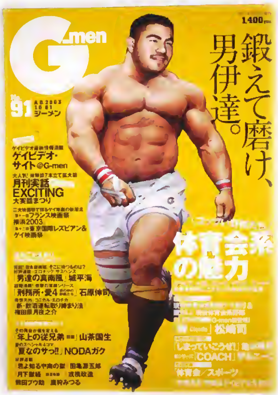
Jiraiya was thirty-one when he made it big in gay erotic art. He'd spent his twenties making ends meet with odd jobs, including a brief stint drawing manga for straight publishers like Shogakkan, but he'd intentionally avoided making a career out of art. "I needed to feed myself, so eventually I became a graphic designer. After three or four years of it I just got bored doing the same thing over and over." Looking to try something new, Jiraiya submitted his first piece to *G-men* in 1998. "At the time, Tagame-san was doing illustration tutorials. I wasn't thinking of taking the class, as I'd already been doing illustration work on my own, but I thought I'd submit my work and see what they thought. The editor immediately got back to me, and asked me to submit art for the next issue. That's how I began my illustration career."

Three years later, Jiraiya became the sole cover illustrator for *G-men*—a position previously held by Gengoroh Tagame. Jiraiya felt the burden of living up to his predecessor's legacy, and devoted himself wholeheartedly to the task at hand. "I would be at my day job and do the illustrations at night. I'd start at 7:00 p.m. and work for six hours for eight days straight, with just one break per night to eat. My eyesight worsened, and I live with someone who was like, 'You gotta stop!' He felt so sorry for me. He just wanted me to quit. That was really hard."

Jiraiya's labor paid off: his computer illustrations have become some of the most iconic gay artwork of the early


G-men
ジーメン 7月号
1,500yen
100
100回目の、ありがとう。
「百貫でぶの百太郎」児雷也
インターネットで世界の野郎と遊べ!
ワールド・チンポ・サイト
G-men 100枚の表紙

G-men #100 (2004)


G-men
1400yen
91
ジーメン
鍛えて磨け、男伊達。
ゲイビデオ・サイト@G-men
月刊実話 EXCITING
体育会系の魅力
COACH

G-men #91 (2003)

twenty-first century. His pinup-style *G-men* covers from 2001 to 2006 typically picture a sole male figure—with varying builds, but always muscular—usually gazing back at the viewer with a coy, flirtatious gleam in his eye. The backgrounds remain blank, enabling Jiraiya's massive male forms to command sole compositional attention. It's in the fine details that Jiraiya's artistry comes to light: the lifelike rendering of shadows on skin, the painstakingly applied body hair, the contours expertly hinted at through the texture of a figure's wardrobe.

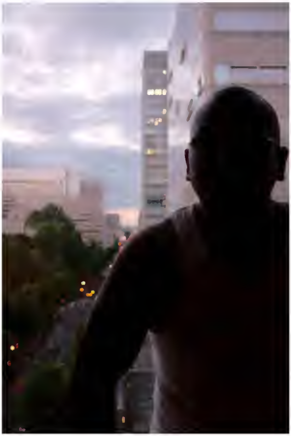
These immediately arresting portraits, drawn freehand and then augmented with design tools like Photoshop, Illustrator, and QuarkXPress, could easily be mistaken for photographs at first glance. Jiraiya makes careful effort to prevent the work from looking "uncomfortably" human. "In order not to fall into the uncanny valley, I have to stare at photos for hours and make sure things look all right. Otherwise it's *kimochiwarui* (gross)." Jiraiya replicates (and enhances) reality by fixing his gaze for extended periods of time at source material gathered from magazines, books, and the Internet. "A lot of people assume I trace… and that's fine I guess, but I don't, actually," Jiraiya states for the record. "I just look at photos to death. It's hard, but my drawings are art pulled from looking at photography for hours."

Jiraiya's men are skillfully sewn together from disparate male body parts. "When I decide what kind of male I'm going to draw, I start collecting things I need to draw him," explains Jiraiya. "If I see a neck form, or an armpit or something else that I like… I've definitely referred to the same images for those details in multiple pieces. So some people might see it and be like, Jiraiya really likes this guy or something. I've seen this before."

Beyond the body, accessories and clothing provide additional erotic information in Jiraiya's minimalist portraits. Jiraiya dedicates as much effort and care to the accoutrements as he does to the men they adorn. "My personality is such that once I get really into something, the work gets much more detailed and complex," he explains. In his oversized art book, *Jiraiya 1998–2012*, Jiraiya notes, referring to the adjacent illustration of a rugby player, "I spent a lot of time and effort representing the taping and supporter more than the player himself."

The resulting realism, Jiraiya reasons, provides more room for identification with the viewer than the simplicity of "super deformed" manga caricatures. "You can look at [my illustrations] and think 'Oh, I'd like to meet that guy.' or 'They look like my friend.' I think it provides a better opportunity to touch people's feelings."

Jiraiya had originally planned only to illustrate for *G-men*, having abandoned his manga career years earlier, but the publishers soon caught wind that he was a double threat. "They were like, 'Well, if you can do manga as well, we'd definitely want you to do both comics and illustrations for us.' When I first sent work to *G-men*, I was just entertaining myself. If I really wanted to do manga, I'd frankly be



ACIFIC
IRVINE

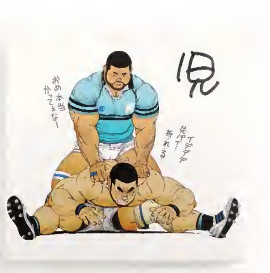
submitting to a real manga publisher and try to make more money. I didn't really feel like doing gay manga for a gay magazine."

Despite his initial reluctance, Jiraiya's manga skills flourished at the magazine. His first collection of manga from *G-men*, *Gonin Beya* (Room for Five Guys), lays out some of the recurring themes that the *mangaka* would hone over the next decade, including group sex, big men in love, and peacocking through atheletic and/or sexual competition. Japanese iconography abounds. Kendo, judo, revealing festival costumes, and sexy Buddhist monks are common features of his comics. Jiraiya especially loves the traditional Japanese loincloth, *fundoshi*, and draws it "every chance I can get," he confesses in his eponymous art book, "... because it can display a strong man beautifully." His burly and surly characters often are faced with obstacles or set off on comical misadventures, but a sense of optimism pervades Jiraiya's stories, which typically end on an upbeat, or at least wistfully bittersweet note.

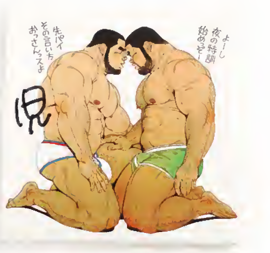
Jiraiya has published two more collections in the decade since his debut: *Aogeba Toutoshi* (Song of Gratitude) and *Sanba no Karasu* (Three Crows). "I'm a slow manga artist," he confesses. "I remember hearing how quickly Tagame turned around his manuscripts and being shocked. I'm glad if I can manage two pages in one day. I'm horrifically slow. Fast people can do sixteen pages in a night." Jiraiya may not be able to churn out manga at a fast pace, but he works at a slow broil, allowing his stories to reveal themselves over time. "I have ideas and outlines and dialogue, but the characters are human, after all, so they take on a life of their own. You can ask any manga artist, and I bet they'll tell you the same."

As a *mangaka*, Jiraiya has become a master of subtlety, uncovering the sublime in small, quotidian moments. Not all of the emotion is happy—characters experience sorrow, loss, and regret. Big men cry. Steely façades and manly muscles give way to deeper emotions. His drawing style today is more illustrative and less cartoonish than his early works, with realistic shadows and more detailed environments lending a sense of the cinematic. "When I was in high school, I thought I wanted to direct movies," he mentions. "But movies require communication between actors and the staff and all that. Money is important, too, but especially communication. Manga is so solitary and still manages to be closer to the movies than any other medium."

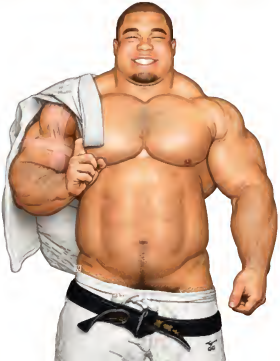
As far as gay icons go, Jiraiya is known for being somewhat reclusive. He prefers to keep his face off the Internet and rarely makes public appearances. The artist opened a window into his life when he started a blog a few years back. "I wanted people to see how irreverent I actually am," Jiraiya explains. "My manga is pretty sincere and serious, so people might think I'm a serious person. I wanted to show my trivial side." His trivial side has gotten him into trouble. "I have kind of a big mouth," he says. "I didn't have a proper upbringing, so I find myself sometimes about to say things out of turn."


イテテテ
先パイ…
折れる
おめ本当
かってえな～

Condoms for the sexual health awareness organization HIV MAP


よーし
夜の特訓
始めるぞー
先パイ
その言い方
おっさんっスよ

Below: Illustration for the *gachimuchi* escort service GG Group



After the 2011 Tohoku earthquake, Jiraiya joked on his blog that relief workers should be sending in cigarettes and booze to the surivors. "In reality, I'm a heavy smoker and drinker. I joked, and yeah... people reacted. I wasn't saying they should send in smokes to a place with no food! For a month after the earthquake there were a bunch of angry people, but that went away." Naturally, Jiraiya has been wary of social media platforms: "Twitter is too direct; it's dangerous. At least on my blog I write drafts first."

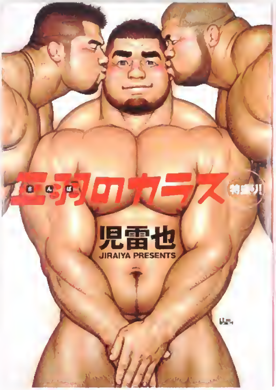
While he may not publicize many aspects of his personal life, Jiraiya's inner world finds its way into elements of his narratives. "Real life experiences definitely influence my story, and I purposely try *not* to make the story appear to be influenced by real events. For example, I have this piece called 'Katsu!' about a Buddhist monk—I can't help but see them sexually. Anyway, the guy I was seeing at the time loved to have sex. I'd say 'I'm so tired and have work tomorrow...' but he'd insist on doing it until the morning. We were always tired. I just translated that into the character of this monk."

When we visit Jiraiya in his hometown of Sapporo, a city of 1.9 million on the northern island of Hokkaido, the artist generously takes us out on the town, to a high-rise building adorned with a rainbow of lights that houses most of the city's gay bars. "There are places for fat guys, for young guys, for older guys," he explains. "That's the level of specialization that exists here." Like most big cities in Japan, Sapporo has a decent number of gay bars, bathhouses, and *hattenba*. "If I were born somewhere else, I might want to head to Tokyo or Osaka, but Sapporo is accepting."

The fantastic little gay bar he took us to that night had a small shelf of books for sale, including several issues of *G-men* and Jiraiya's entire oeuvre. "You can tell what you're in for by the magazines laid out at the bar," he clues us in. "If there's a copy of *Samson*, you're in for really big and older men. *G-Men* means another thing; *Badi* means another thing." It's not just advertising for the publishers—print culture helps define the sexual identity of the space.

"There are lots of places for gays in Sapporo, but when I was a child, I had no idea," says Jiraiya. It wasn't until he discovered *Sabu* magazine as a teenager, with its *yaro* ("dude") type models, that he felt a sense of connection to gay identity. "I didn't like girls, and I would see plenty of transvestites around, but I knew I was different from them. At the time I couldn't help but wonder if I wasn't the only one of my kind. That was scary. I was in my late teens when I found *Sabu* magazine, and tears started pouring down my face. And Tagame's work was in that magazine!"

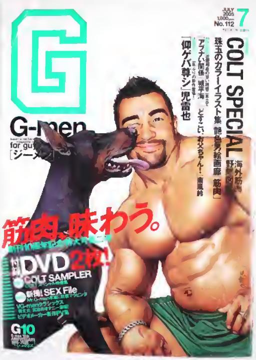
Since Jiraiya first came into contact with Tagame's early gay manga in the late 1980s, manga as an art form has evolved significantly. "Manga reader competency is so sophisticated now," Jiraiya says, with a sense of optimism. "Their ability to parse manga is really strong." As a result, he feels no major pressure to explore other storytelling media such as film or anime. "I think comics both in Japan and in the US are so advanced that you don't need to be good at anything else. If you can make it in comics, you're good."


三羽のカラス
児雷也
JIRAIYA PRESENTS

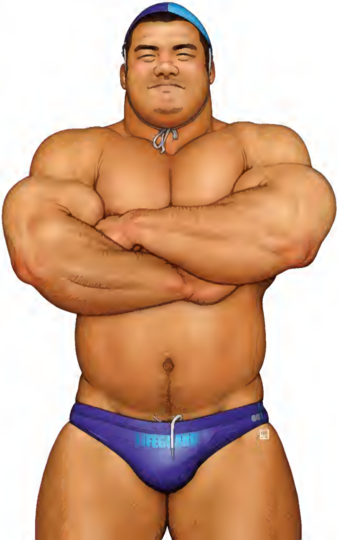
Sanba no Karasu (2012)

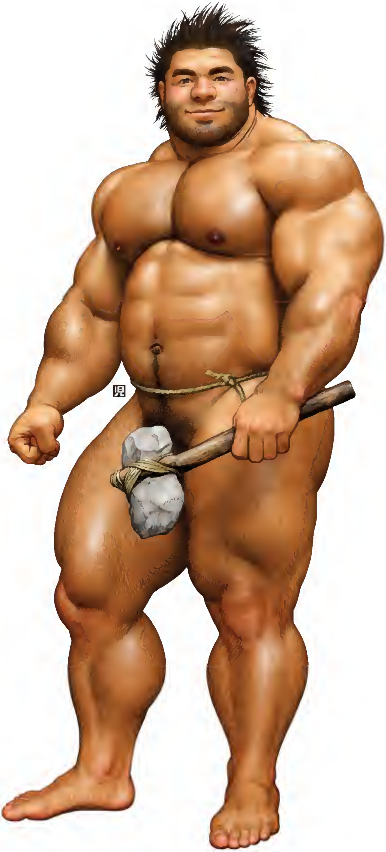
Addressing the current state of gay acceptance in Japanese culture, Jiraiya says he's witnessed the conditions of gay life gradually improve. "[In my teenage years], there weren't a lot of nice things for people like me," he says. "Maybe it would have been different if I were a good-looking popular kid..." Jiraiya muses. "In schools these days, there are gay kids now who are so popular! I'm like, what is this, the plot of a manga? So, some people have that, but *most* people aren't that way." Bullying of gay and transgender students remains a huge problem in the Japanese public school system, according to recent studies that paint the behavior as deeply entrenched and often enabled by school staff.

Despite incremental change, most queer people around the world still don't have it easy in the year 2014. "For those people... they have needs too, and some of them have times when life just doesn't seem great," Jiraiya says. "That negative feeling doesn't last forever, of course, but when they do feel that way, they can read my manga and my manga are happy. Even if the stories don't start out happy, they end up happy. Readers should consider them fairy tales and escapes from reality for a minute before they go to bed. I'm glad if that makes them feel better. That's always been my preamble."


G
G-men
JULY 2005
No. 112
7
COLT SPECIAL
珠玉のカラーイラスト集
アブナい関係
「仰ゲバ尊シ」児雷也
筋肉、味わう。
DVD 2枚!
COLT SAMPLER
SEX File
G10

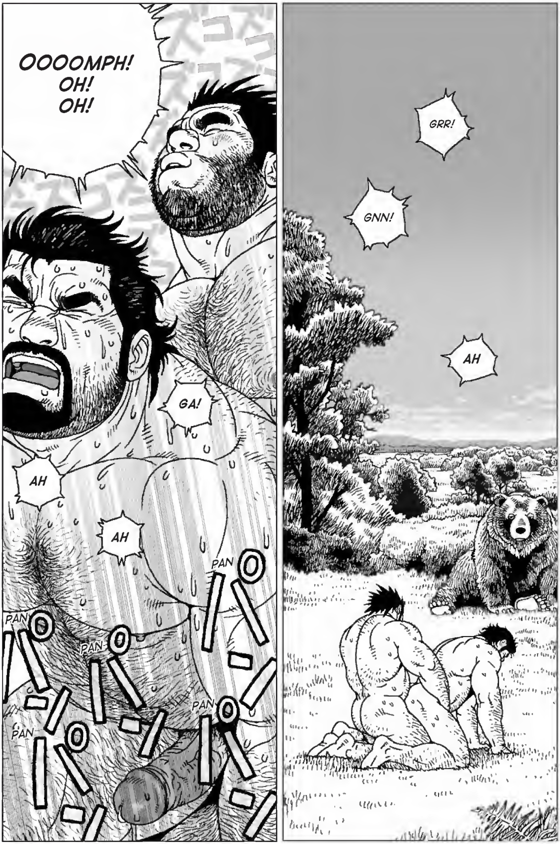
G-men #112 (2005)

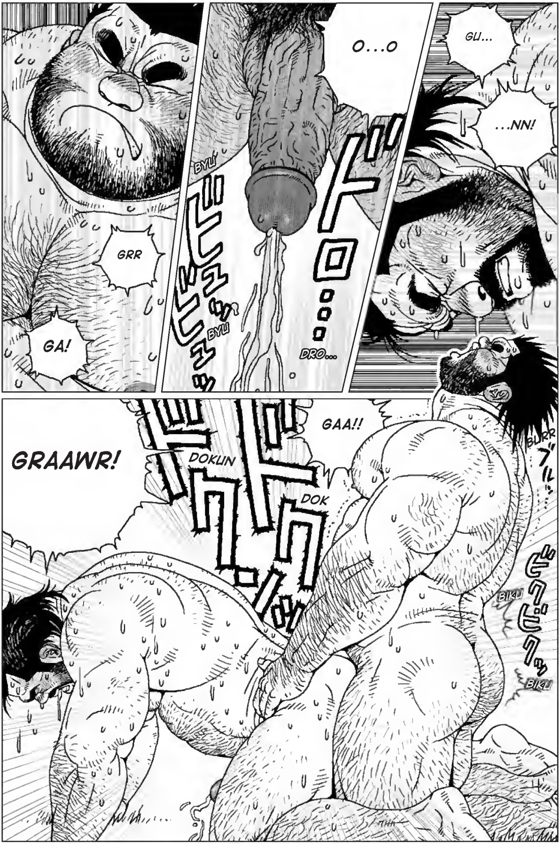


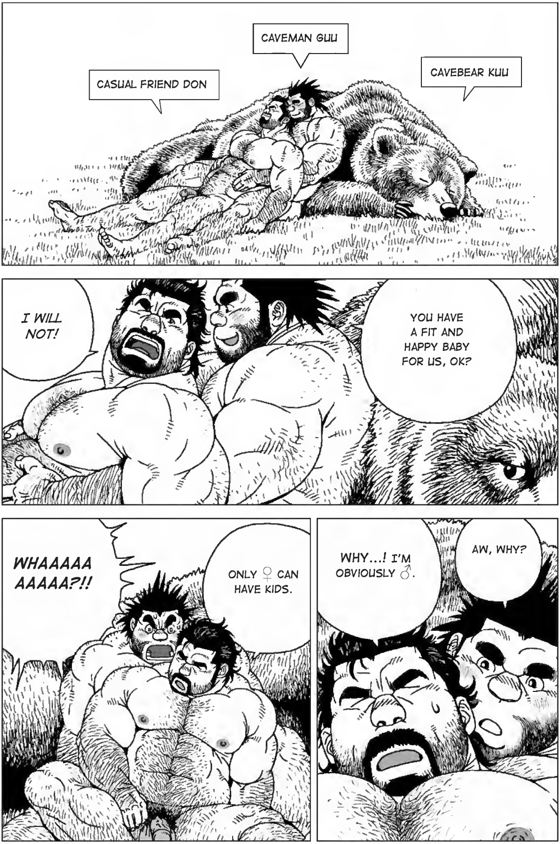

児

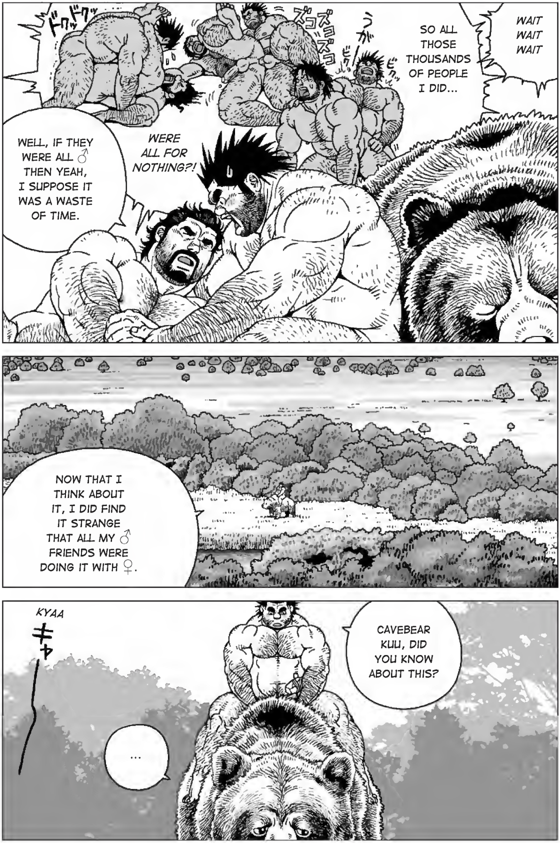
CAVEMAN
GUU

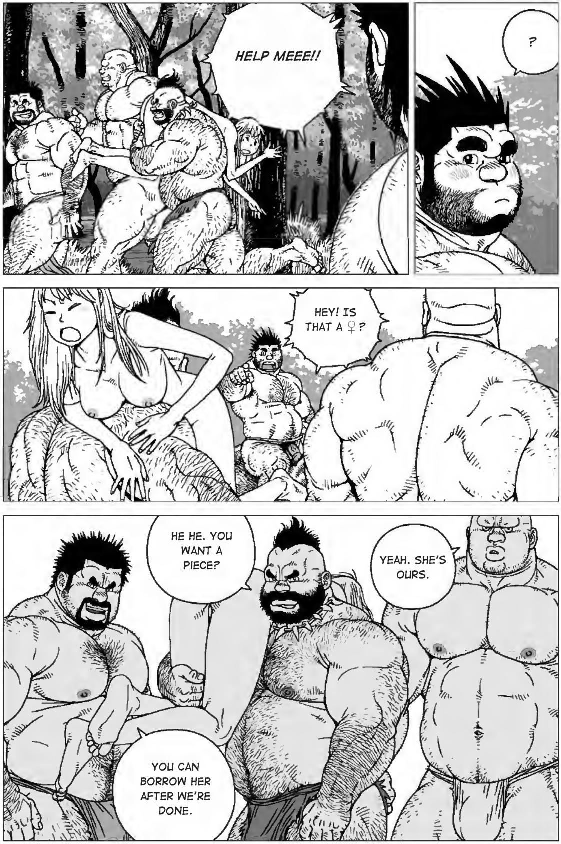
JIRAIYA

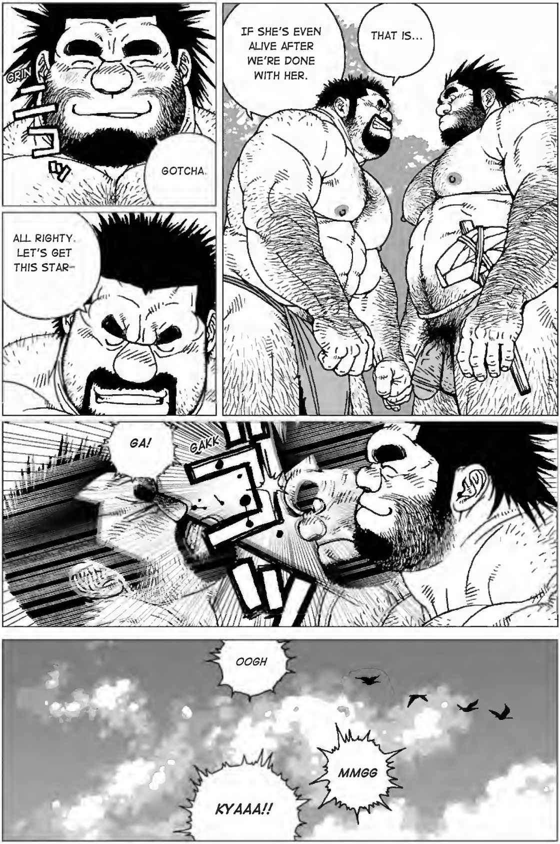

GRR!
GNN!
AH
OOOOMPH! OH! OH!
GA!
AH
AH
PAN
PAN
PAN
PAN
PAN

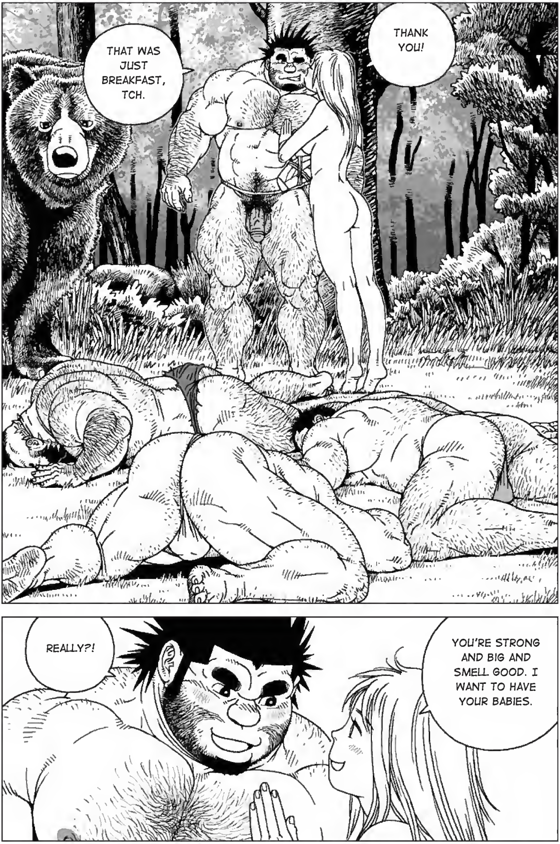

GU...
...NN!
O...O
ドロ…
DRO...
ビュビュッ
BYU
BYU
GRR
GA!
GAA!!
ブルッ
BURR
ドクンドクッ
DOKUN
DOK
GRAAWR!
ビクビクッ
BIKU
BIKU

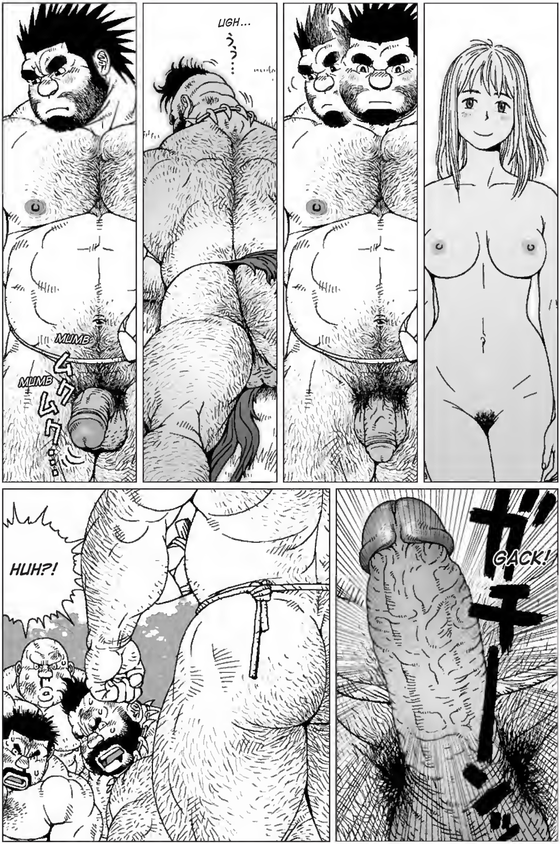

CAVEBEAR KUU
CAVEMAN GUU
CASUAL FRIEND DON
YOU HAVE A FIT AND HAPPY BABY FOR US, OK?
I WILL NOT!
AW, WHY?
WHY...! I'M OBVIOUSLY ♂.
ONLY ♀ CAN HAVE KIDS.
WHAAAAAA AAAAA?!!


WAIT
WAIT
WAIT
SO ALL THOSE THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE I DID...
ドクッドクッ
ズコズコズコ
うが
ビクッビクッ
WERE ALL FOR NOTHING?!
WELL, IF THEY WERE ALL ♂ THEN YEAH, I SUPPOSE IT WAS A WASTE OF TIME.
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, I DID FIND IT STRANGE THAT ALL MY ♂ FRIENDS WERE DOING IT WITH ♀.
CAVEBEAR KUU, DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS?
KYAA
キャ
...


HELP MEEE!!
?
HEY! IS THAT A ♀?
HE HE. YOU WANT A PIECE?
YEAH. SHE'S OURS.
YOU CAN BORROW HER AFTER WE'RE DONE.


THAT IS...
IF SHE'S EVEN ALIVE AFTER WE'RE DONE WITH HER.
GRIN
GOTCHA.
ALL RIGHTY. LET'S GET THIS STAR–
GAKK
GA!
OOGH
MMGG
KYAAA!!

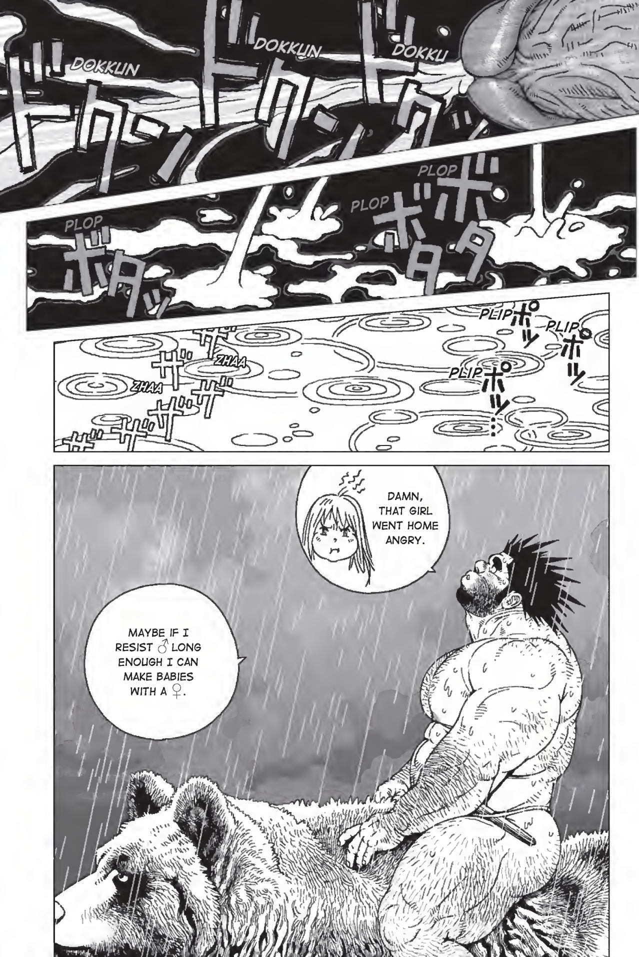

THANK YOU!
THAT WAS JUST BREAKFAST, TCH.
YOU'RE STRONG AND BIG AND SMELL GOOD. I WANT TO HAVE YOUR BABIES.
REALLY?!

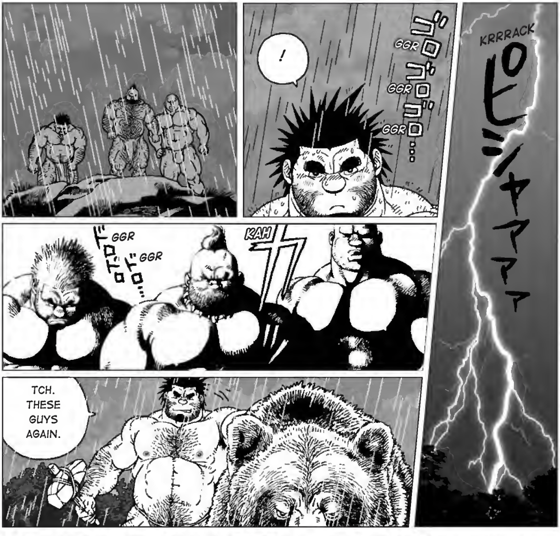

UGH...
うう…
MUMB
MUMB
ムクムク…
GACK!
ガチーンッ
HUH?!

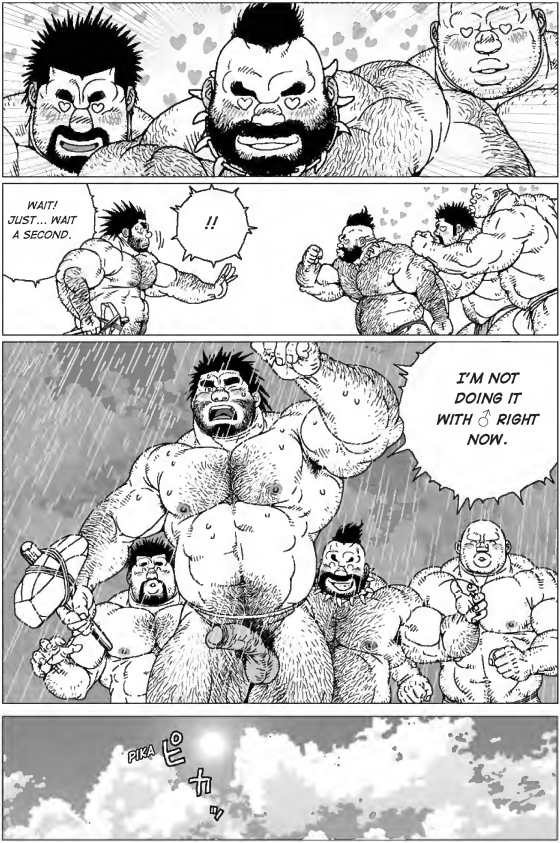
ズブリッ
ZERRB
WHA... NOOOO!
AAAGHH!
ズ
ZABOOM
ボッ
GAA!

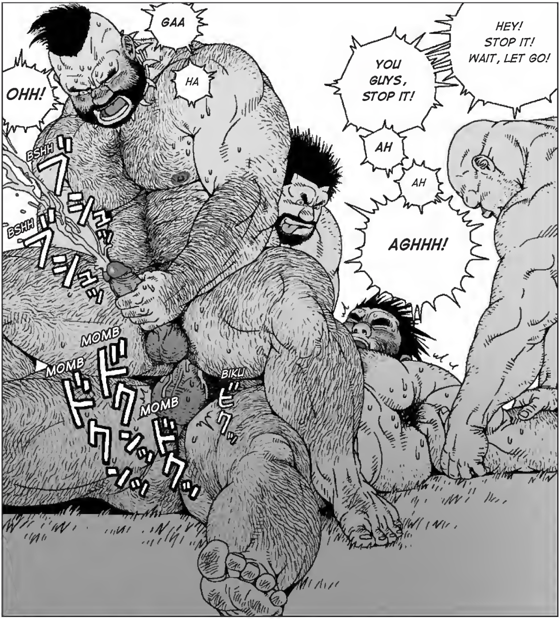
ズッコズッコ
ZOK
ZOK
OOH!
ズッコズッコ
ZOK
ZOK
ブシュッ
BSHH
GA
ブシュ
BSH
ブシュッ
BSHHT
GWAAAA!

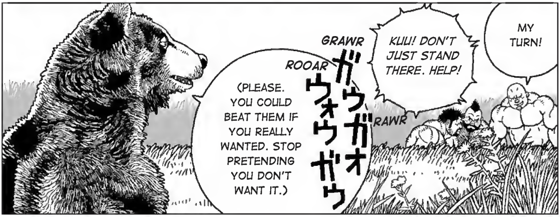
GAAA-
-AAAAAHH
DOKKU
ドクッ
DOKKUN
ドクーンッ
DOKKUN
ドクーンッ

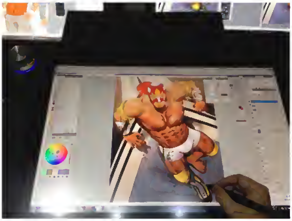

DOKKU
ドクッ
DOKKUN
ドクン
DOKKUN
ドクン
PLOP
PLOP
ボタ
PLOP
ボタッ
PLIP
ポッ
PLIP
ポッ
PLIP
ポッ
ZHAA
ZHAA
ザザザ
DAMN, THAT GIRL WENT HOME ANGRY.
MAYBE IF I RESIST ♂ LONG ENOUGH I CAN MAKE BABIES WITH A ♀.

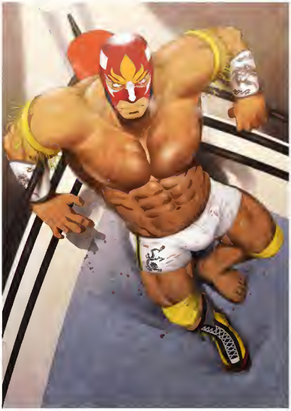

KRRRACK
ピシャアアア
!
ゴロゴロゴロ…
GGR
GGR
GGR
KAH
カ
ドロドロ…
GGR
GGR
TCH. THESE GUYS AGAIN.
I'LL JUST KEEP WIPING THEM OUT!!


!!
WAIT! JUST... WAIT A SECOND.
I'M NOT DOING IT WITH ♂ RIGHT NOW.
PIKA
ピカッ


HEY! STOP IT! WAIT, LET GO!
YOU GUYS, STOP IT!
GAA
HA
OHH!
AH
AH
AGHHH!
BSHH ブシュッ
BSHH ブシュッ
MOMB
MOMB
MOMB
ドクンッ
ドクンッ
ドクッ
BIKU ビクッ


MY TURN!
KUU! DON'T JUST STAND THERE. HELP!
GRAWR
ROOAR
ガウガオ
ウォウガウ
RAWR
(PLEASE. YOU COULD BEAT THEM IF YOU REALLY WANTED. STOP PRETENDING YOU DON'T WANT IT.)





Gai Mizuki
水樹凱

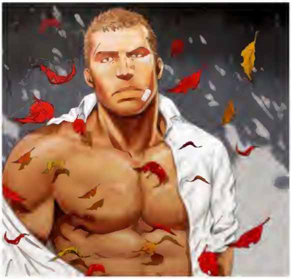
"I started drawing gay manga because of the internet," Gai Mizuki says. The freedom with which he saw his friends making art online inspired him to do the same. "I had this friend who was doing *kemono* (furry) comics, but I was the only one who knew about it. Once he launched his website, he made a ton of friends. Likewise, I didn't have any gay friends, so I thought it might be good for me to start a site." He was twenty-three years old, but he was no novice at manga. Drawing since as he could hold a pen upright, the artist made his first real comic "with frames" in the sixth grade.

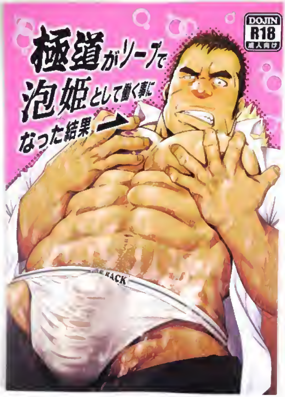
The Internet also enabled Mizuki's first excursion into gay social life. "I met a guy online who brought me to a gay bar," he remembers. The importance of Internet communities cannot be overstated where it concerns gay culture today. For an artist like Mizuki, getting online opened up a world of possibility. Today, he publishes digitally, markets print *doujinshi* through his Twitter and blog, and even designs novelistic homoerotic *doujin* games. But the impact of piracy, which seems to operate in a parallel ecosystem at odds with creative intent, cannot be ignored. To Mizuki, piracy is more than a nuisance to his productivity. Discussing the matter, Mizuki invokes an ire echoed by many of his peers.

"Pirating makes me very sad. Whenever I hear from fans about how my work and the works of other Japanese manga artists and writers are being uploaded without permission on these foreign 'uploader' boards, I write to each individual rep at the server host companies to please take the content down. And that eats up a lot of the time I should be spending making comics! I cannot tolerate the illegal free downloading of comics that other fans have gone out of their way to pay for with money. It's not fair to them, and devalues all the work I toil over. It's really a sad practice. If anyone reading this has a habit of downloading my comics, *please stop now!* If this behavior continues, I believe there will soon no longer be any gay comics artists left."

Pop culture is an important source of energy for Mizuki, who derives influence from major productions he follows online and through mass media. Mizuki's full-length manga *Embog* involves hypnosis or sleep treatment, a sci-fi narrative conceit borrowed from TV. It's an element the artist also works into this book's one-shot story—and prequel to *Embog*—"Fantasy and Jump Rope," inspired by a random jump rope championship he happend to catch on television. "While I'm developing the story, erotic scenes materialize in my head as images," Mizuki says, "and then I construct them like a puzzle."

The popular anime series *Kill La Kill* and *Tiger and Bunny* have both provided frequent inspiration for slash porn parodies in Mizuki's illustrations and manga. Slash is a readily used subgenre of BL (boys' love) manga. It's worth





How a Yakuza Came to Work as a Prostitute in a Soapland (2013)

noting that slash, under different guises around the world, has flourished with the advent of boys' love comics. Parody is endemic to BL.

"I love BL comics and buy them all the time," Mizuki effuses. "I used to draw BL before I started doing gay comics, so it's a very close genre." Body types are a huge factor in the distinction Mizuki sees between the two mediums. "I'd say my work is in some ways close to the BL genre, but since I don't depict so many thin, good-looking men, it's probably more appropriate to call it gay."

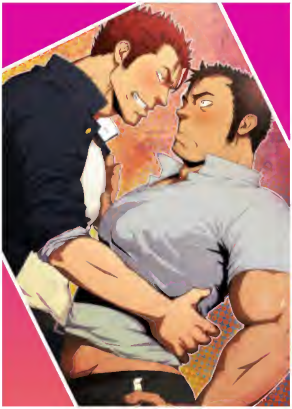
As for what distinguishes his BL-style narratives, it's all about atmosphere. Mizuki finds greater freedom to explore internal dialogue and character development, without the overdependence on action characteristic of gay manga. However, Mizuki also strives to capture the essence of the interior through facial expression and characterization. "I try to tell the story of each person's internal workings through depictions of their physical persona." He self-depricatingly adds that he isn't necessarily good at it.

"I personally think of the magazine *Barazoku* when I hear the word," Mizuki says of the foreign term often used for gay manga, *bara*. "I even used to run pieces in it myself, but don't think the association is apt. So I'd identify more as 'gay' than '*bara*.'" While he's been published in plenty of magazines marketed to gay men, including *G-men*, *Badi*, and the late *Barazoku*, Mizuki flourished most under the editorial direction of the comics anthology *Nikutaiha*. "*Nikutaiha* was geared toward female readers and was more BL-oriented. Still, even for BL, *Nikutaiha* had a gay bent in a lot of its stories. It was also special because it ran the work of masters like Gengoroh Tagame, Takashi Matsuzaka, and Takeshi Matsu."

It was Gengoroh Tagame's work that revealed the world of gay manga to Mizuki. "The first gay manga I read was by Tagame-sensei. I can't recall what it was, but seeing a large muscular man get amputated was shocking in a manga story." In the years since that early encounter, Mizuki has seen an increase of foreign interest in gay manga, especially from France and Italy. "There are more foreigners from outside of Japan coming to Comiket and other *doujinshi* festivals than in the past, coming to buy gay comics, so the notoriety of Japanese gay comics has slowly risen, I think. But, so-called *yaoi* [hardcore BL] comics are what really sell abroad."

Despite this new wave of interest from outside Japan, Mizuki believes gay manga still has some maturing to do. "Because the gay manga culture hasn't been nurtured, I think we end up with a lot of 'adult' plot lines. Honestly, it'd be great to have more kinds of genres of gay manga, but as it is, it's all under the auspices of 'adult comics.'"

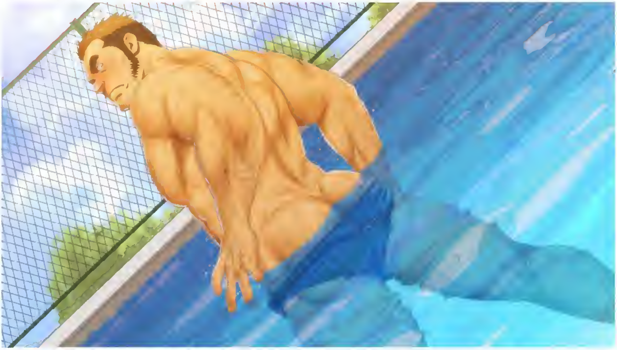
Given the opportunity to break out of erotica about large gay men, Mizuki says he'd write more sci-fi. He's fascinated by world building and the opportunity to experiment with story structure in a way that is not consistent with reality,

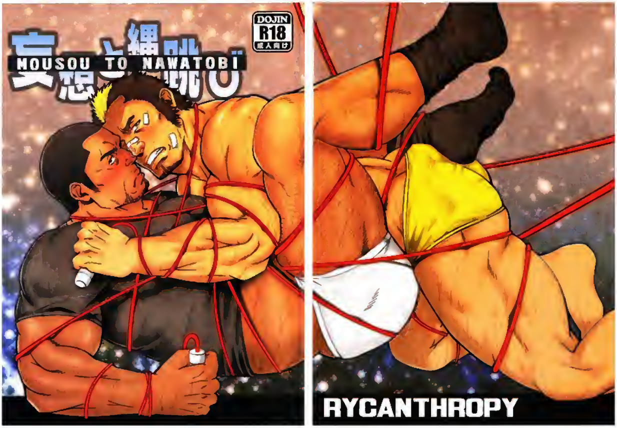


while keeping true to his character's internal lives. Asked about what makes sci-fi so enjoyable, he jokes that the great sagas like *Star Trek* are so invested in developing settings and building universes that it seems the plots don't really matter.

Gai Mizuki's tastes are wide-ranging and enthusiastic. "Recently, I was incredibly moved by *Gunjo* (Ultramarine) by Nakamura Ching," he says. "It was serialized in *Ikki*, a general market magazine published by Shogakkan, but the author is a lesbian and the plot of the manga is about a lesbian who is hired to kill her lover's husband, and how they run off together. It's a very powerful work." He may be a visual artist, but music also plays a big part in his process. Two of his current inspirations: anime score composer Yoko Kanno and Nakata Yasutaka, a songwriter who has produced hit albums by Kyary Pamyu Pamyu and Perfume.

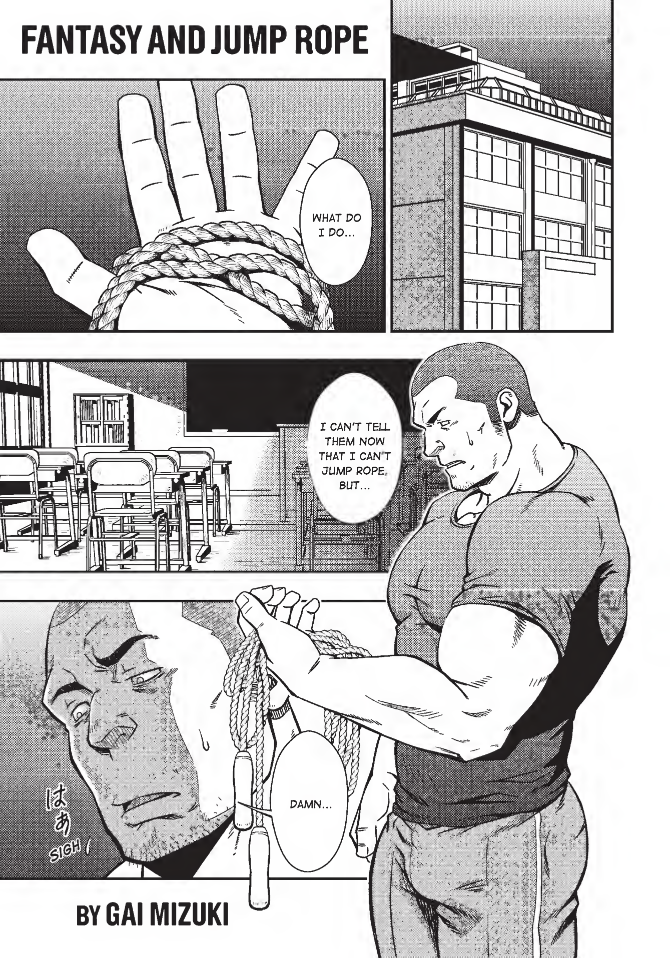
Mizuki is a truly versatile cultural magpie whose playfully erotic, pop-infused comics appeal to a broad spectrum of fans. But primarily, he's a fan himself. "There are too many manga I love to list which ones I like," he tells us. "Sorry!"



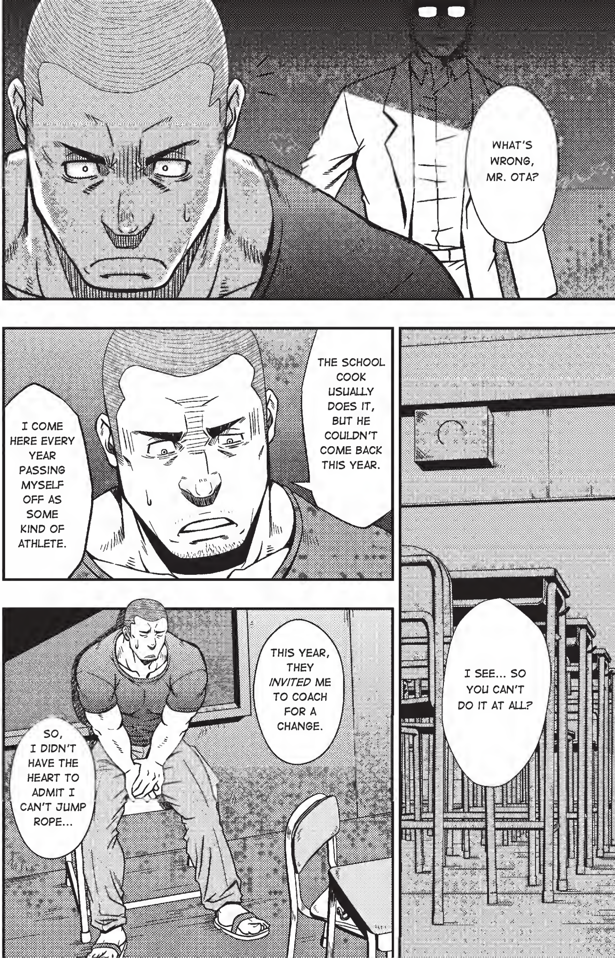

妄想と縄跳び
MOUSOU TO NAWATOBI
DOJIN
R18
成人向け
RYCANTHROPY

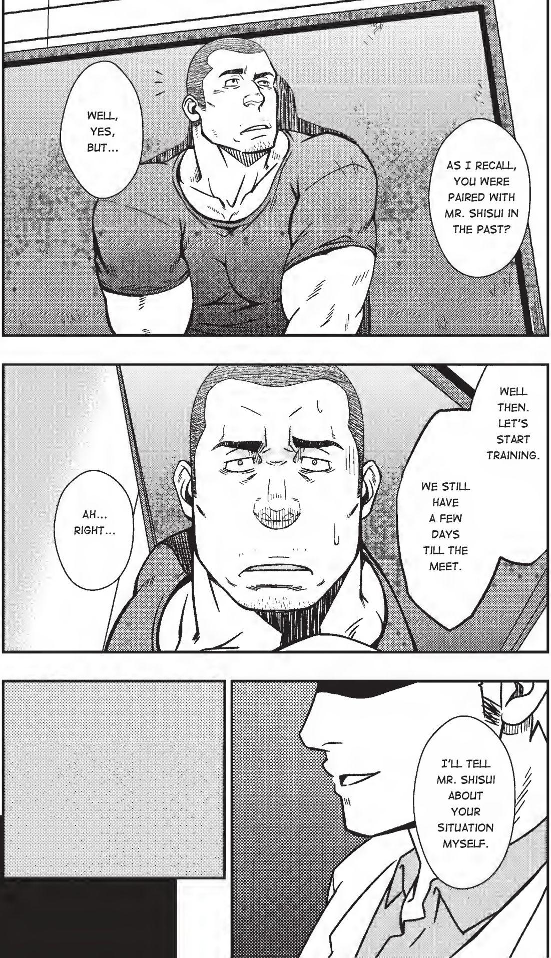
Front and back cover of *Fantasy and Jump Rope*, 2012
Self-published through Gai Mizuki's *doujinshi* circle, Rycanthropy

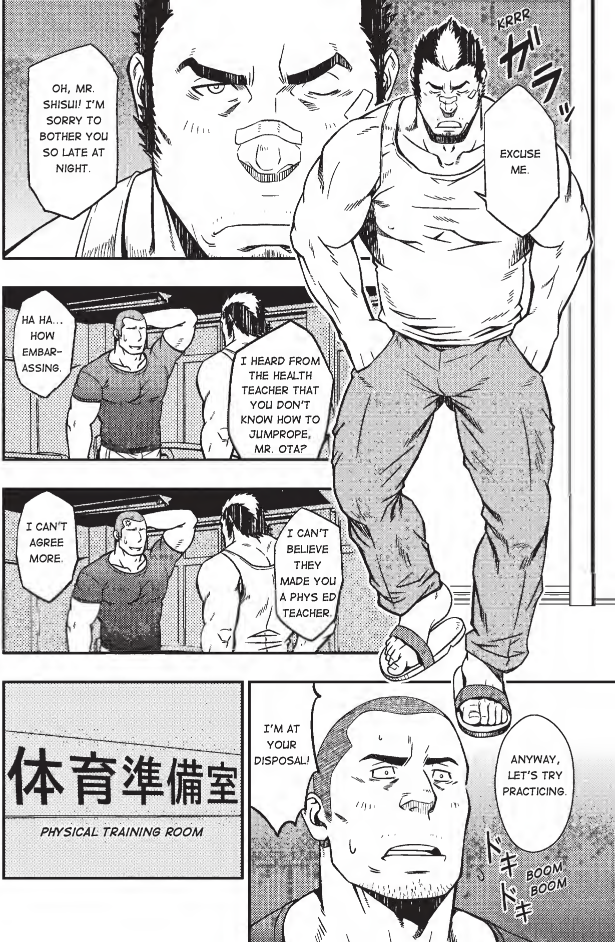
FANTASY AND JUMP ROPE

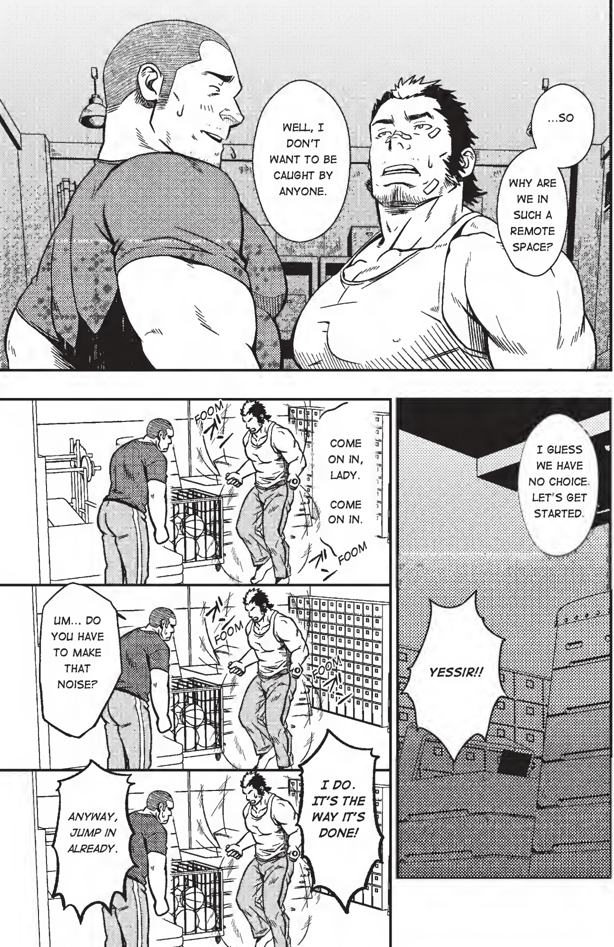

WHAT DO I DO...
I CAN'T TELL THEM NOW THAT I CAN'T JUMP ROPE, BUT...
はあ
SIGH
DAMN...

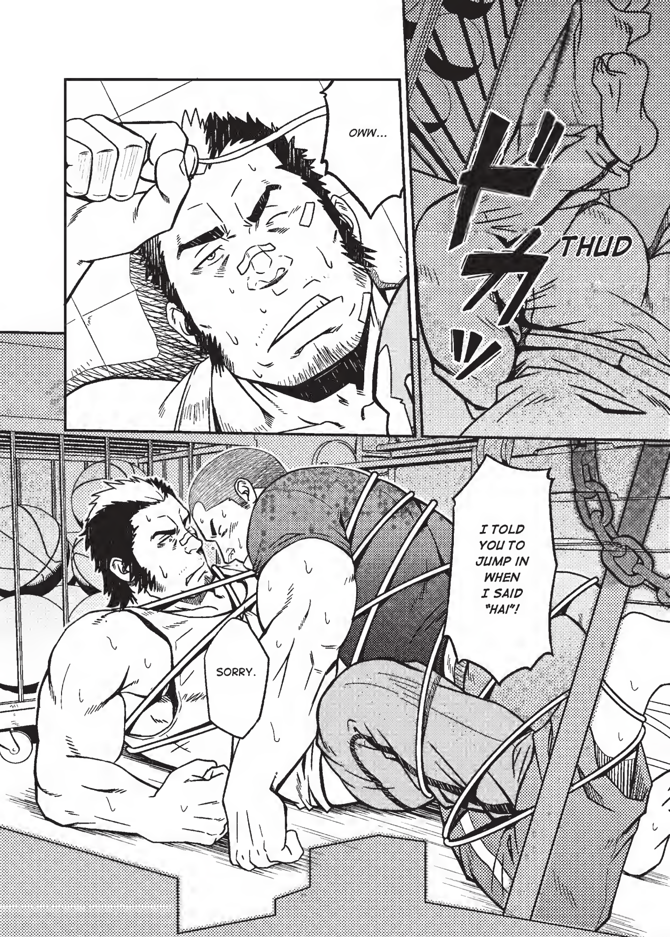
BY GAI MIZUKI

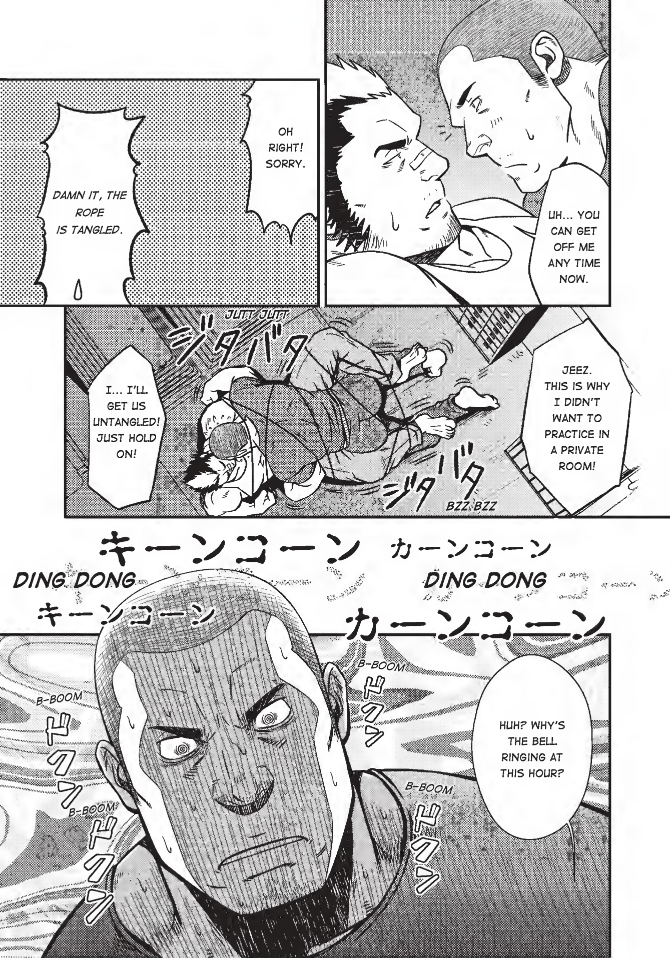

WHAT'S WRONG, MR. OTA?
THE SCHOOL COOK USUALLY DOES IT, BUT HE COULDN'T COME BACK THIS YEAR.
I COME HERE EVERY YEAR PASSING MYSELF OFF AS SOME KIND OF ATHLETE.
THIS YEAR, THEY *INVITED* ME TO COACH FOR A CHANGE.
SO, I DIDN'T HAVE THE HEART TO ADMIT I CAN'T JUMP ROPE...
I SEE... SO YOU CAN'T DO IT AT ALL?

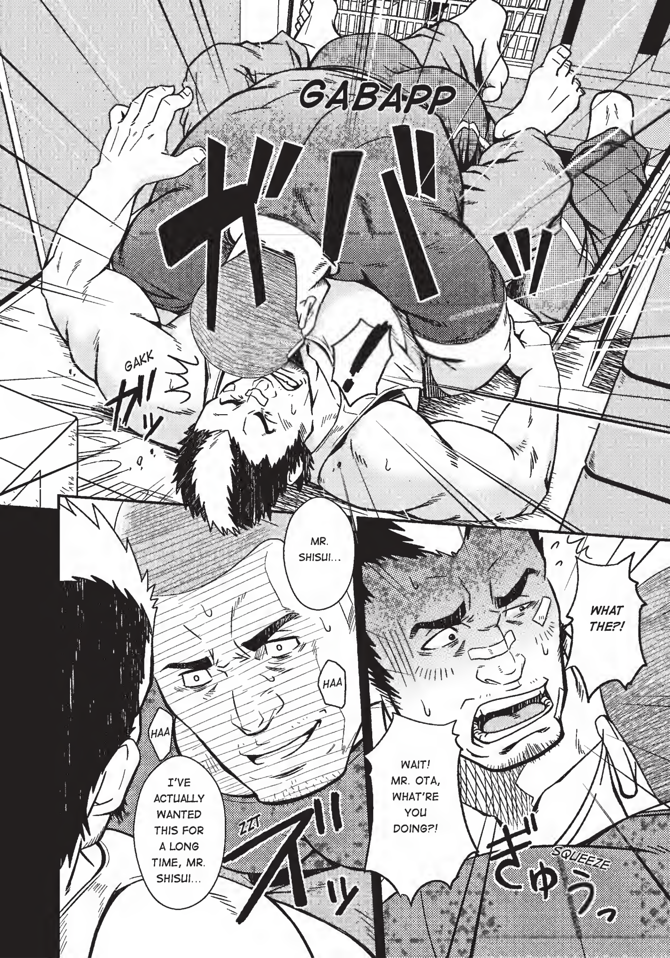

AS I RECALL, YOU WERE PAIRED WITH MR. SHISUI IN THE PAST?
WELL, YES, BUT...
WELL THEN. LET'S START TRAINING.
WE STILL HAVE A FEW DAYS TILL THE MEET.
AH... RIGHT...
I'LL TELL MR. SHISUI ABOUT YOUR SITUATION MYSELF.

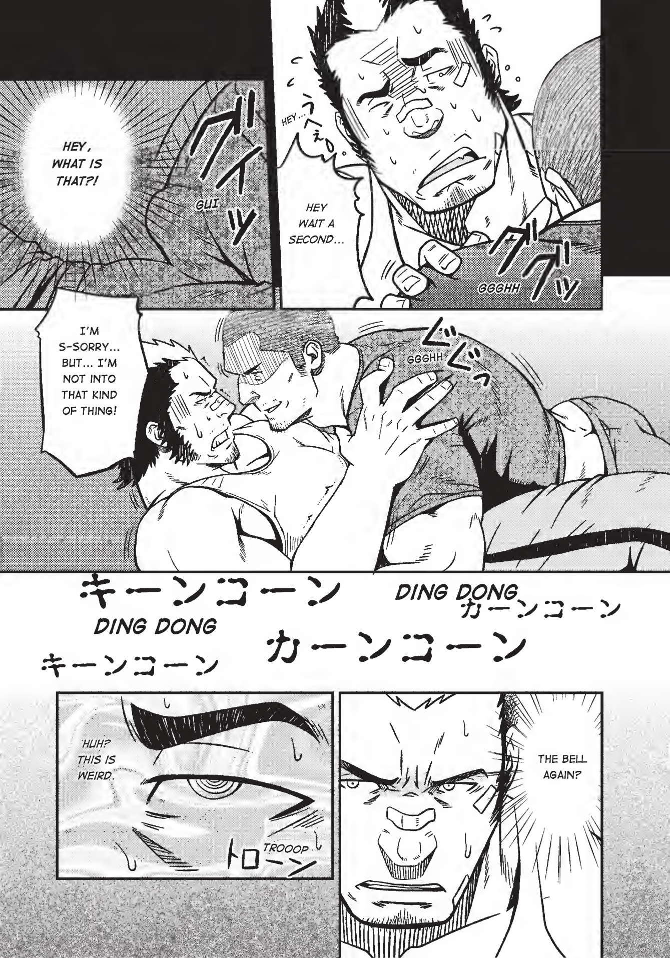

KRRR ガラッ
EXCUSE ME.
OH, MR. SHISUI! I'M SORRY TO BOTHER YOU SO LATE AT NIGHT.
I HEARD FROM THE HEALTH TEACHER THAT YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO JUMPROPE, MR. OTA?
HA HA... HOW EMBARASSING.
I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY MADE YOU A PHYS ED TEACHER.
I CAN'T AGREE MORE.
ANYWAY, LET'S TRY PRACTICING.
I'M AT YOUR DISPOSAL!
ドキドキ BOOM BOOM
体育準備室
PHYSICAL TRAINING ROOM

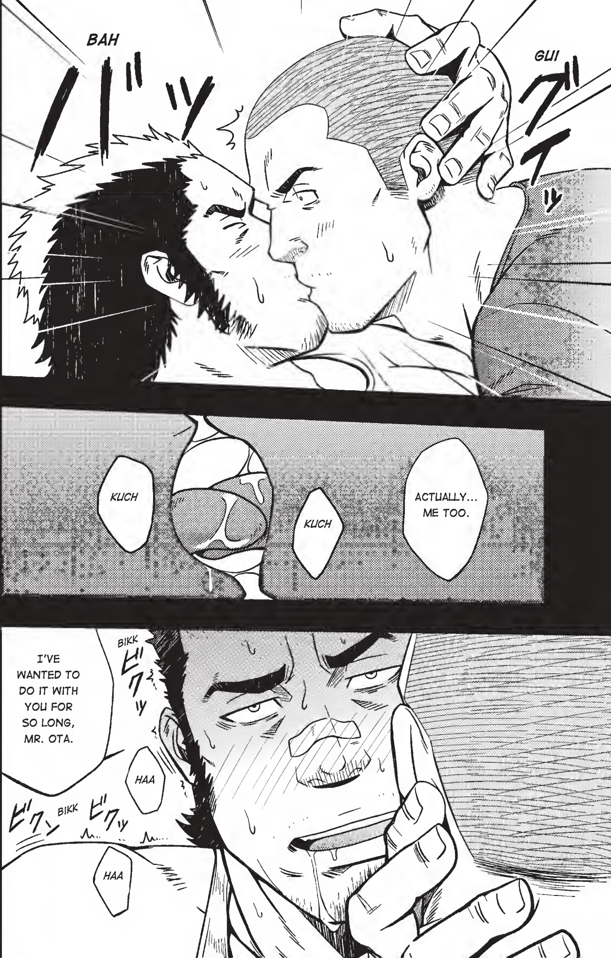

...SO
WHY ARE WE IN SUCH A REMOTE SPACE?
WELL, I DON'T WANT TO BE CAUGHT BY ANYONE.
I GUESS WE HAVE NO CHOICE. LET'S GET STARTED.
YESSIR!!
FOOM
COME ON IN, LADY.
COME ON IN.
FOOM
FOOM
FOOM
UM... DO YOU HAVE TO MAKE THAT NOISE?
I DO. IT'S THE WAY IT'S DONE!
ANYWAY, JUMP IN ALREADY.

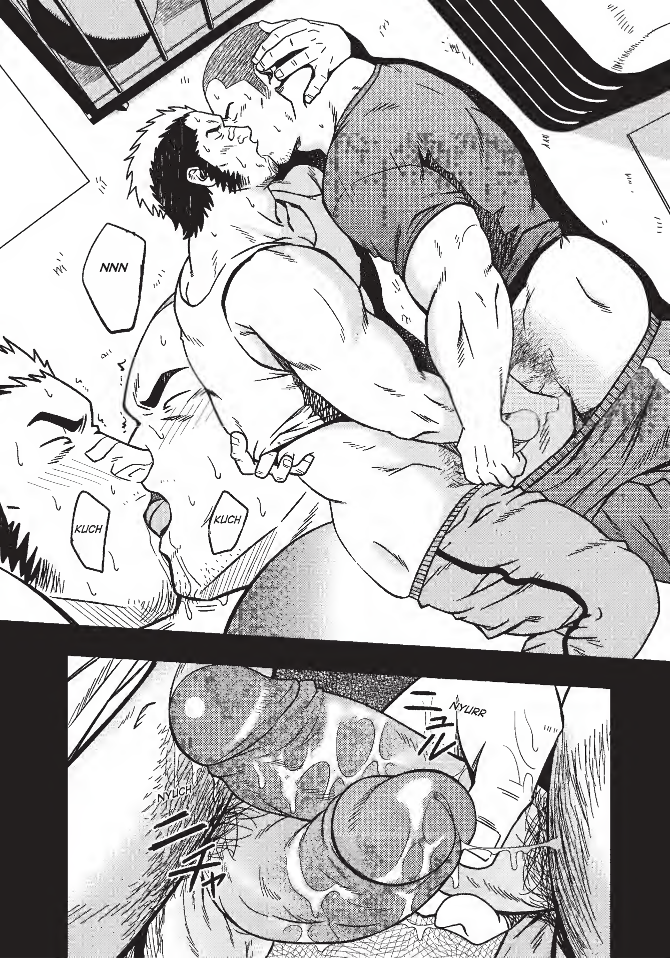

ドガッ
THUD
OWW...
I TOLD YOU TO JUMP IN WHEN I SAID "HAI"!
SORRY.

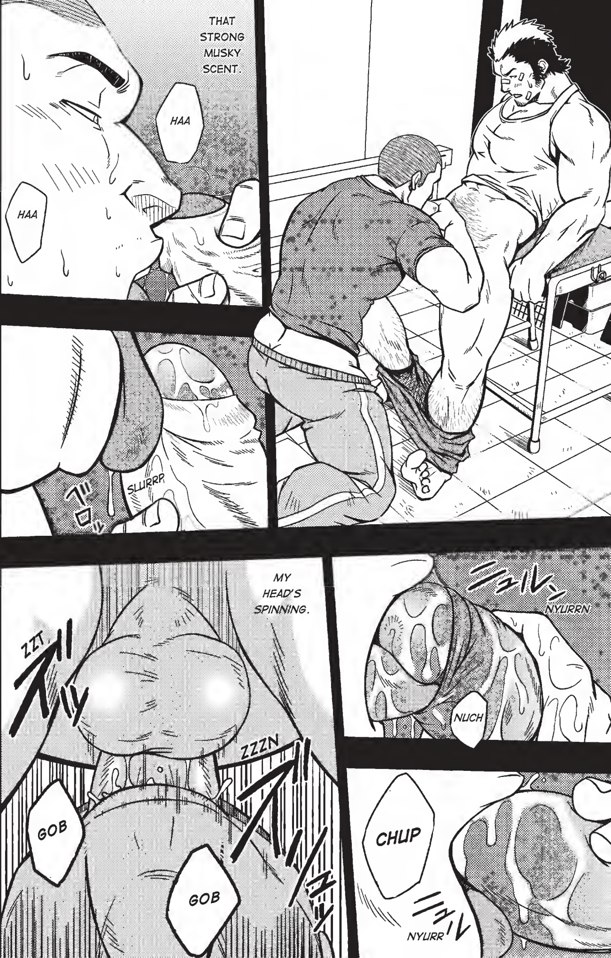

UH... YOU CAN GET OFF ME ANY TIME NOW.
OH RIGHT! SORRY.
DAMN IT, THE ROPE IS TANGLED.
JUTT JUTT
ジタバタ
JEEZ. THIS IS WHY I DIDN'T WANT TO PRACTICE IN A PRIVATE ROOM!
I... I'LL GET US UNTANGLED! JUST HOLD ON!
ジタバタ
BZZ BZZ
カーンコーン
DING DONG
キーンコーン
DING DONG
カーンコーン
キーンコーン
HUH? WHY'S THE BELL RINGING AT THIS HOUR?
B-BOOM
ドクン
B-BOOM
ドクン
B-BOOM
ドクン
B-BOOM
ドクン


GABAPP
ガバッ
GAKK
ガッ
WHAT THE?!
WAIT! MR. OTA, WHAT'RE YOU DOING?!
SQUEEZE
ぎゅうっ
MR. SHISUI...
HAA
HAA
I'VE ACTUALLY WANTED THIS FOR A LONG TIME, MR. SHISUI...
ZZT
ズッ

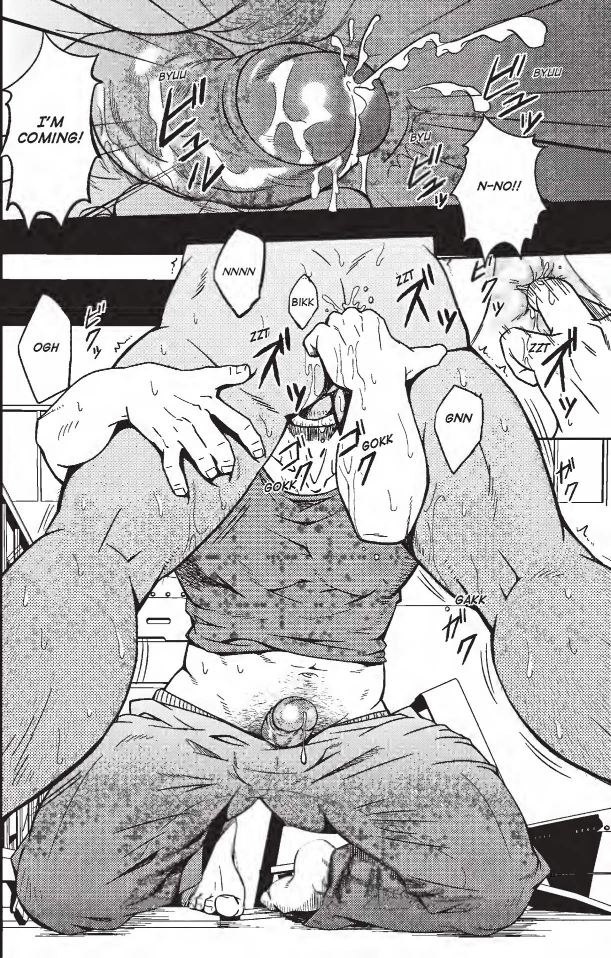

HEY... うへぇ
HEY WAIT A SECOND...
GGGHH ググッ
HEY, WHAT IS THAT?!
GUI グイッ
I'M S-SORRY... BUT... I'M NOT INTO THAT KIND OF THING!
GGGHH ぐぐっ
キーンコーン
DING DONG
カーンコーン
DING DONG
キーンコーン
カーンコーン
THE BELL AGAIN?
HUH? THIS IS WEIRD.
TROOOP トローン

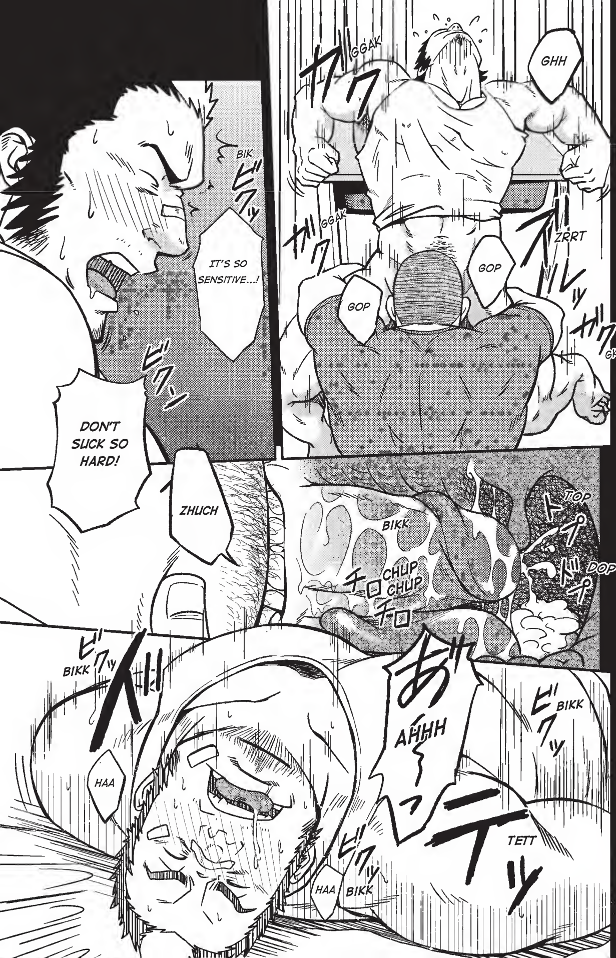

GUI
グイッ
BAH
バッ
ACTUALLY... ME TOO.
KUCH
KUCH
BIKK
ビクッ
I'VE WANTED TO DO IT WITH YOU FOR SO LONG, MR. OTA.
HAA
HAA
BIKK
ビクン ビクッ

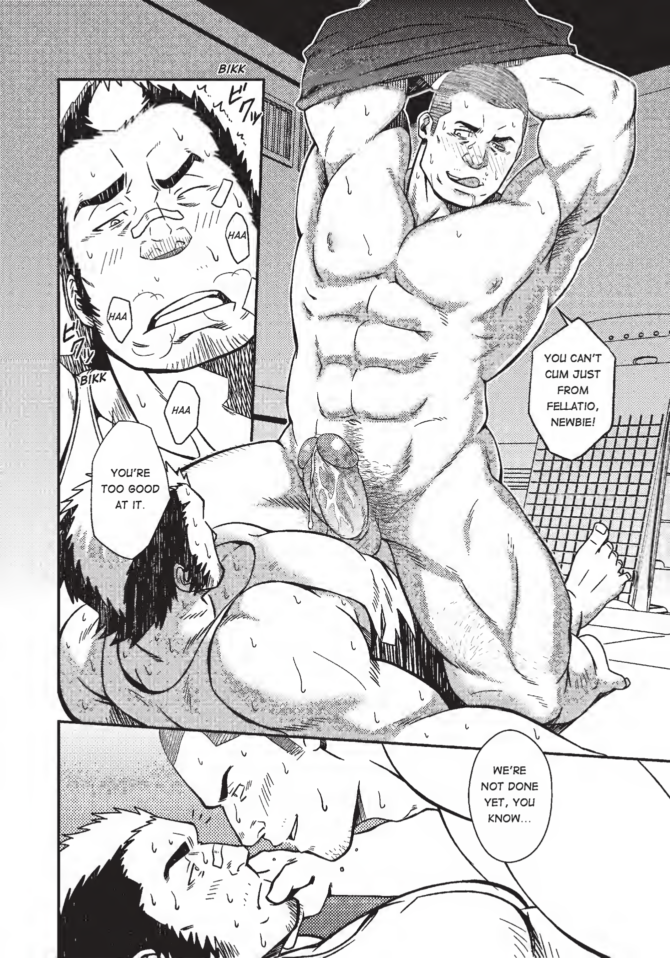

NNN
KUCH
KUCH
ニュル
NYURR
NYUCH
ニチャ

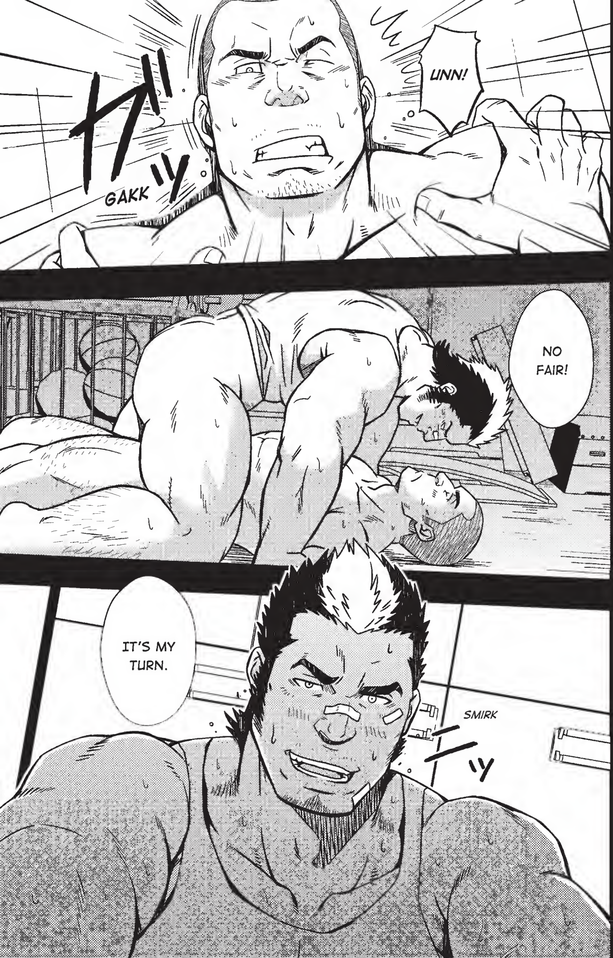

THAT STRONG MUSKY SCENT.
HAA
HAA
ベロッ
SLURRP
ニュルン
NYURRN
NUCH
MY HEAD'S SPINNING.
ズリッ
ZZT
ZZZN
GOB
GOB
CHUP
ニュル
NYURR

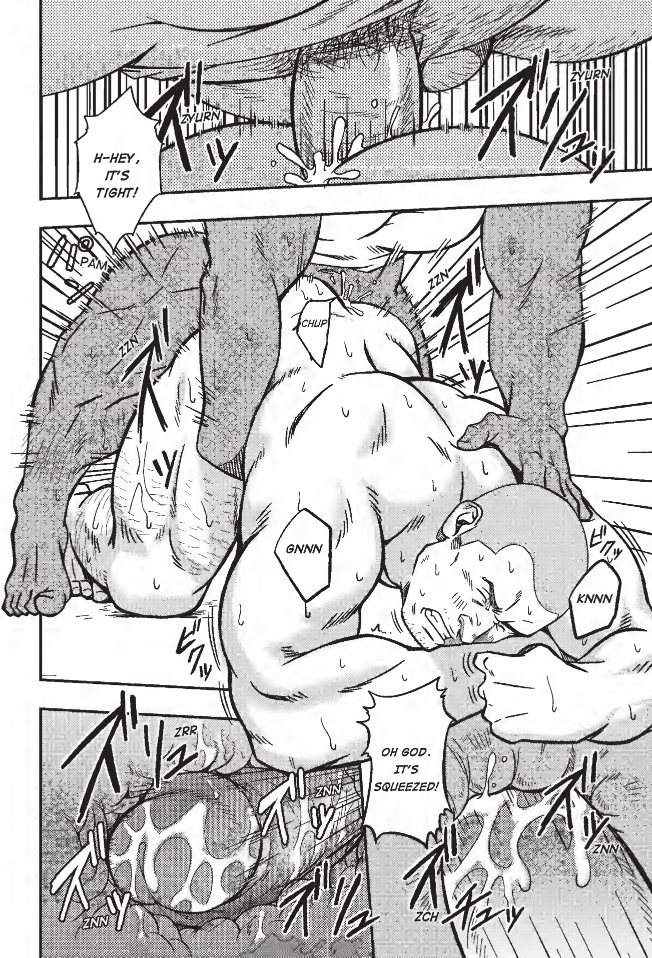
...N!!
BIKK
ビクッ
ZBB
EGH!
WAIT!
ZRRRN
WHAT?!
BIKK
ビクッ
N-NOT THERE!
AHH!
BIKK
ビクン
KREE
コリッ
CHUP
CHUP
BIKK
ビクン

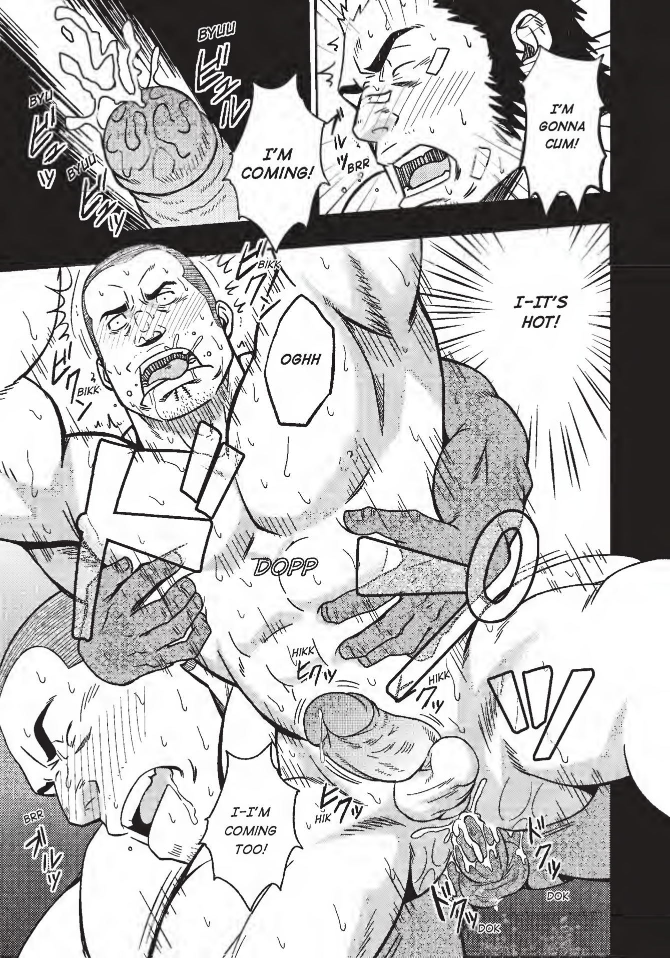

BYUU
ビュッ
N-NO!!
BYU
ビュッ
BYUU
ビュルル
I'M COMING!
ZZT
ズッ
ビクッ
ZZT
ズッ
NNNN
BIKK
GNN
GOKK
ゴク
GOKK
ゴク
ZZT
ズッ
ビクッ
OGH
ガク
GAKK
ガク

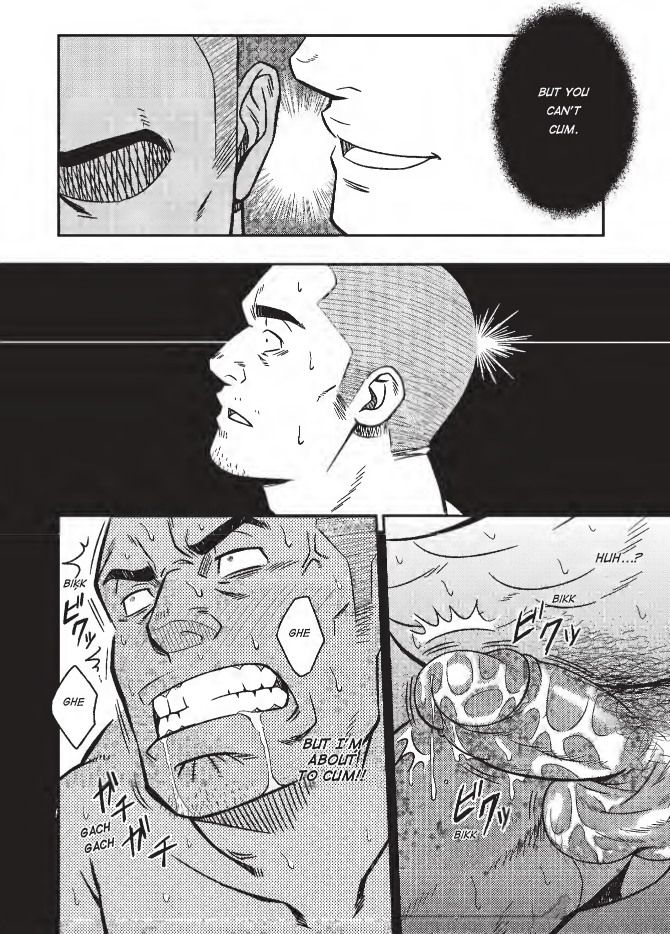

GHH
ガク GGAK
ガク GGAK
ズルッ ZRRT
GOP
GOP
ガク GKK
ビクッ BIK
IT'S SO SENSITIVE...!
ビクン
DON'T SUCK SO HARD!
ZHUCH
BIKK
チロ チロ CHUP CHUP
トプ TOP
ドプ DOP
ビクッ BIKK
あ゛ AHHH
ビクッ BIKK
テッ TETT
HAA
HAA
ビクッ BIKK

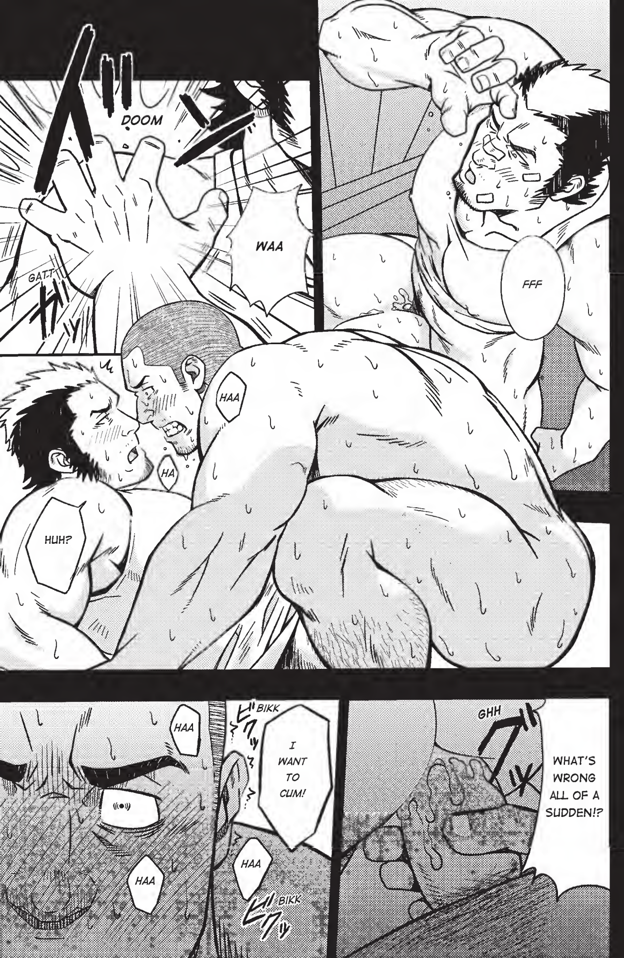

YOU CAN'T CUM JUST FROM FELLATIO, NEWBIE!
BIKK
ビクッ
HAA
HAA
ビクッ
BIKK
HAA
YOU'RE TOO GOOD AT IT.
WE'RE NOT DONE YET, YOU KNOW...

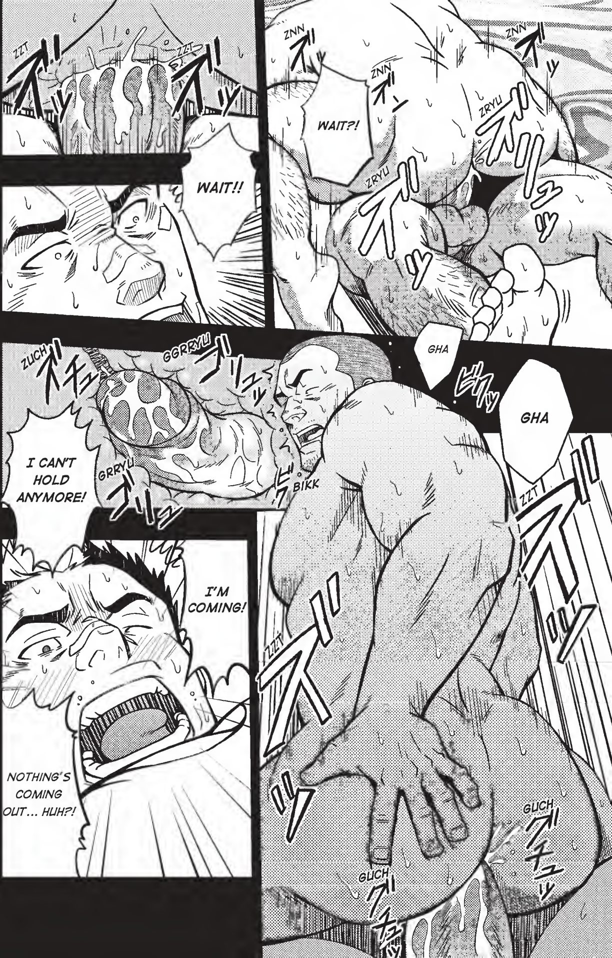

UNN!
ガッ
GAKK
NO FAIR!
SMIRK
ニッ
IT'S MY TURN.

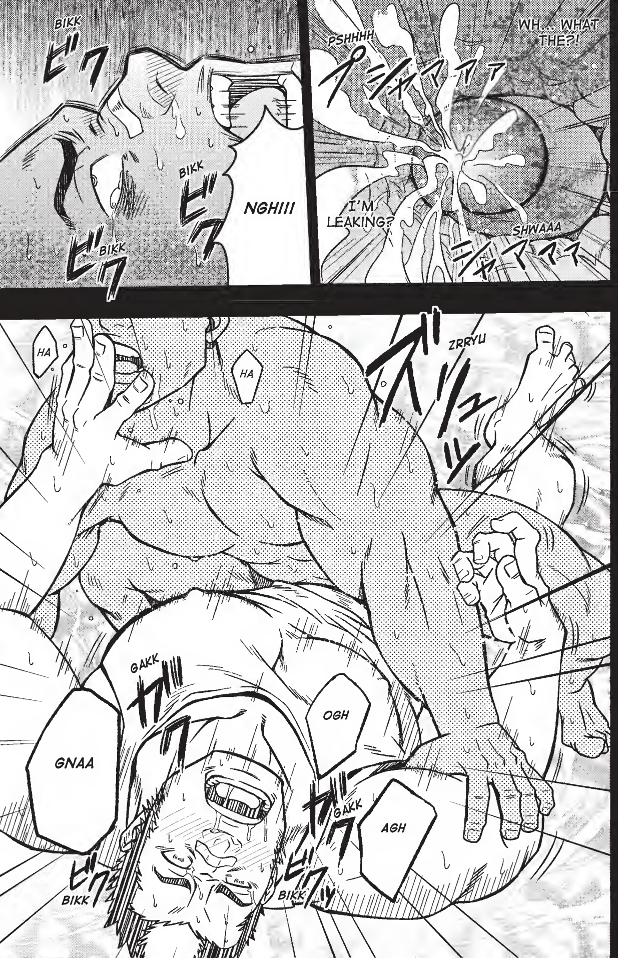

ズリュッ
ZYURN
ズッ
ZYURN
H-HEY, IT'S TIGHT!
ZZN
ズッ
PAM
CHLIP
ZZN
ズッ
GNNN
ビクッ
KNNN
ビクッ
ズッ
ZNN
OH GOD. IT'S SQUEEZED!
ZCH
チュッ
ズリュ
ズリュ
ZRR
ズッ
ZNN
ズッ
ZNN

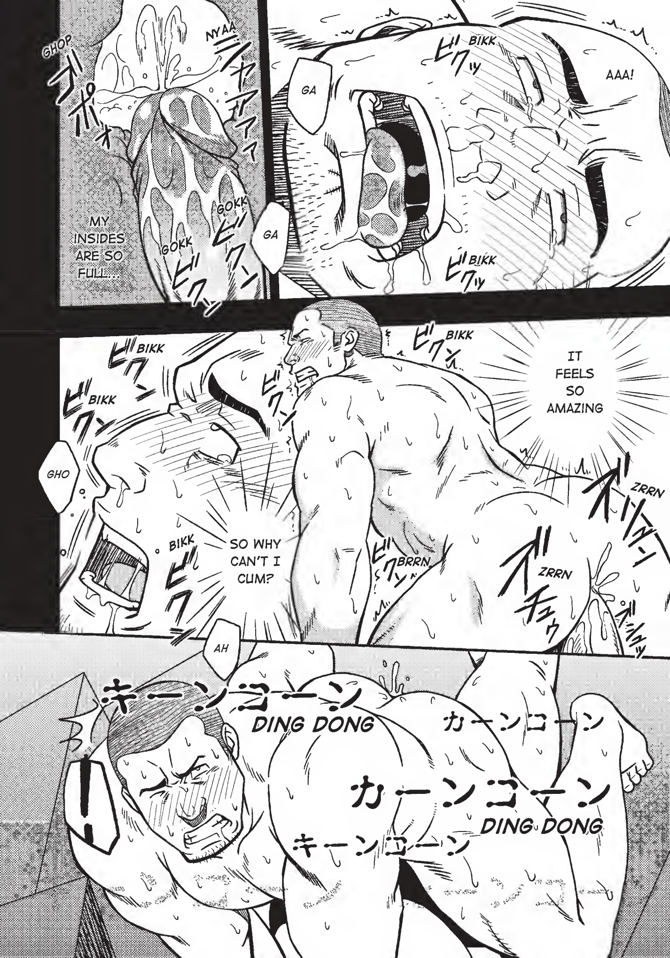

I'M GONNA CUM!
BRR
I'M COMING!
BYUU
BYU
BYUU
I-IT'S HOT!
OGHH
BIKK
BIKK
DOPP
HIKK
HIKK
HIK
I-I'M COMING TOO!
BRR
DOK
DOK

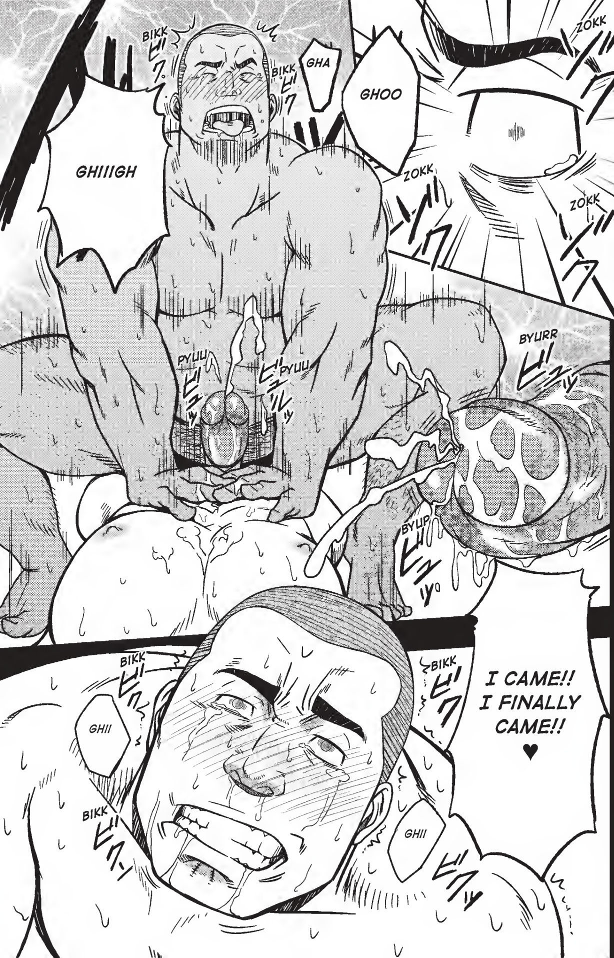

BUT YOU CAN'T CUM.
HUH...?
BIKK
ビクッ
ビクッ
BIKK
BIKK
ビクッ
GHE
GHE
BUT I'M ABOUT TO CUM!!
ガチガチ
GACH GACH

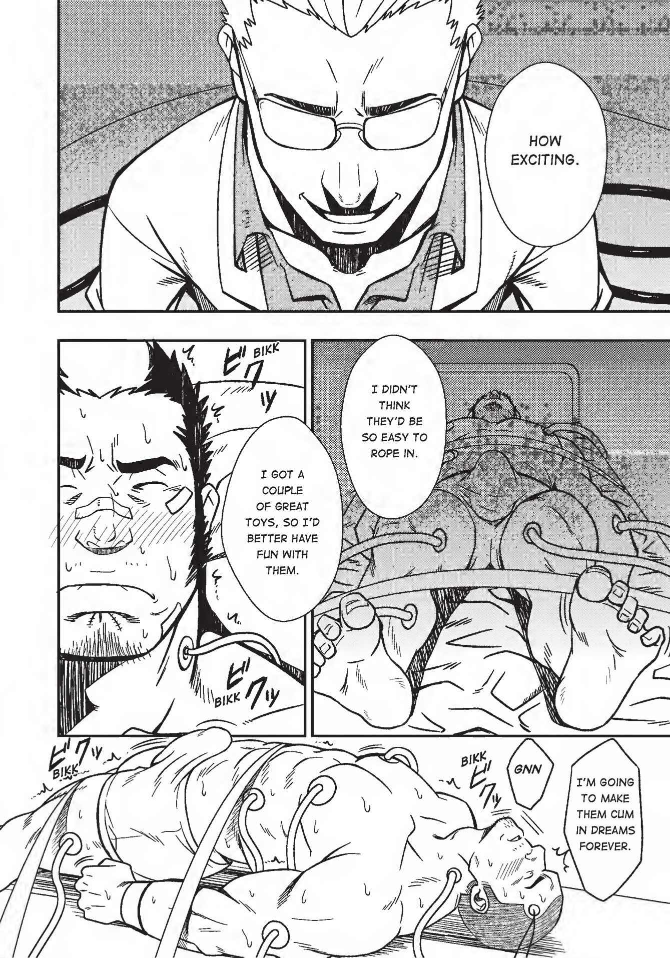

FFF
DOOM
WAA
GATT
HAA
HA
HUH?
GHH
WHAT'S WRONG ALL OF A SUDDEN!?
BIKK
HAA
I WANT TO CUM!
HAA
HAA
BIKK

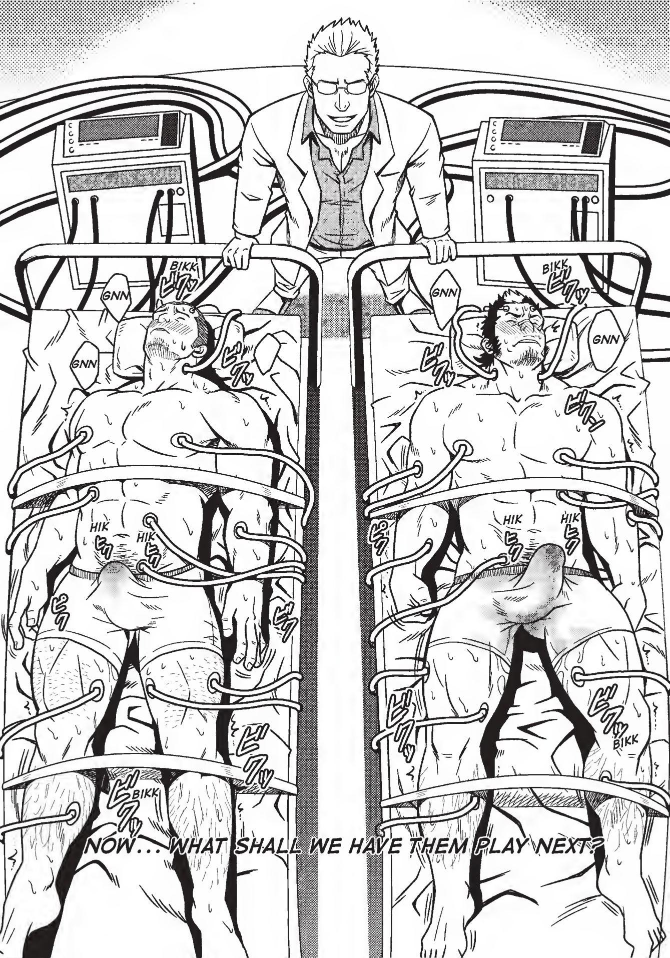

ZNN ズッ
WAIT?!
ZNN ズン
ZRYU ズリュッ
ZRYU ズリュッ
ZZT ズッ
ZZT ズッ
WAIT!!
GHA
ビクッ
GHA
GGRRYU ゴリュッ
ZUCH ズチュ
I CAN'T HOLD ANYMORE!
GRRYU ゴリュ
BIKK ビク
ZZT ズッ
ZZT ズッ
GUCH グチュッ
GUCH グチュッ
I'M COMING!
NOTHING'S COMING OUT... HUH?!

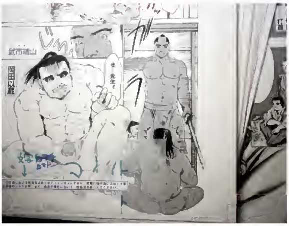

WH... WHAT THE?!
PSHHHH
プシャアアア
I'M LEAKING?
SHWAAA
シャアアア
BIKK
ビク
NGHIII
BIKK
ビク
BIKK
ビク
ZRRYU
ズリュッ
HA
HA
OGH
GAKK
ガク
GNAA
AGH
GAKK
ガク
BIKK
ビク
BIKK
ビクッ

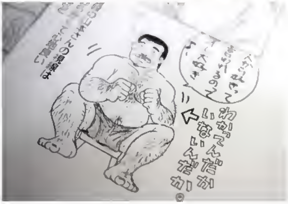

ビクッ BIKK
AAA!
GA
GA
ビクッ BIKK
ジャアアア NYAA
ゴポォ GHOP
ビクン GOKK
ビクン GOKK
MY INSIDES ARE SO FULL...
IT FEELS SO AMAZING
ビクン BIKK
ビクン BIKK
ビクン BIKK
GHO
SO WHY CAN'T I CUM?
ビクン BIKK
ビクン BRRN
ズリュ ZRRN
ズチュゥ ZRRN
AH
キーンコーン DING DONG
カーンコーン
カーンコーン DING DONG
キーンコーン
!


ZOKK
ZOKK
ZOKK
GHOO
GHA
BIKK
BIKK
GHIIIGH
BYURR
PYUU
PYUU
BYUP
I CAME!! I FINALLY CAME!! ♥
BIKK
GHII
BIKK
GHII
BIKK


HOW EXCITING.
I DIDN'T THINK THEY'D BE SO EASY TO ROPE IN.
ビクッ BIKK
I GOT A COUPLE OF GREAT TOYS, SO I'D BETTER HAVE FUN WITH THEM.
ビクッ BIKK
I'M GOING TO MAKE THEM CUM IN DREAMS FOREVER.
GNN
ビクッ BIKK
ビクッ BIKK


BIKK ビクッ
GNN
GNN
ビクッ
ビクッ
HIK
HIK ヒク
ピク
ビクッ BIKK
BIKK ビクッ
GNN
GNN
ビクッ
HIK ヒク
HIK ヒク
ピク
ビク
ビクッ
BIKK ビクッ
NOW... WHAT SHALL WE HAVE THEM PLAY NEXT?





Fumi Miyabi
文雅

"What makes a historical setting really different from a modern one is how manly the men can be," says Fumi Miyabi. "Their way of thinking was very stoic. Their composure was much more masculine."

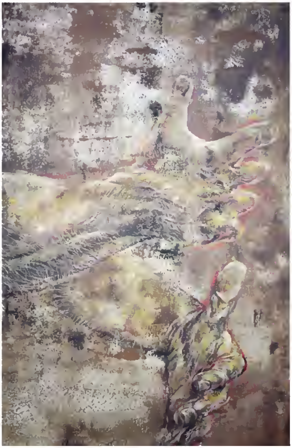
The masculinity of the mythological Japanese past is on full display in this volume's one-shot manga, "Tengudake." "I drew 'Tengudake' based on my own adaptation of Japanese folklore," Fumi Miyabi notes. In Shinto legend, *tengu* are disruptive demons, or literally "heavenly dogs," with the ability to take both human and avian form. In Fumi Miyabi's version, the *tengu* terrorizes a small village with his gluttony and lust, only to have the tables turned on him in a hallucinogenic orgy with the village elders.

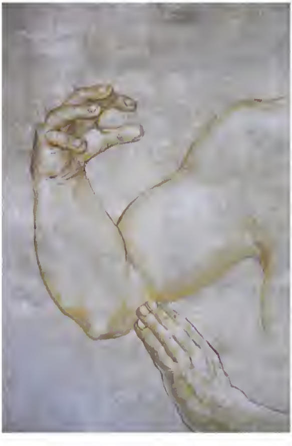
While Fumi Miyabi's erotic imagination flourishes in the historical, he takes a more sensitive, emotional approach to portraying contemporary life. For example, he depicts a tender office romance between two shy, bearish men in the series ○×□, published in *Samson*—a long-running gay magazine that specializes in daddies and chubs. Fumi Miyabi makes a clear distinction between his creative approaches to the past and to the present: "When I write for a modern setting, the characters have more psychological complexity and sometimes psychological issues, internal problems," he says. "It's more focused on the ins and outs of the relationship. When I want to write a purely physiological story that's more about the bodies and the circumstances, I'll set it in the past, where I can focus on the physical aspects of the relationship rather than the emotional minutiae. So, physicality is a bigger aspect of my historical writing."

Fumi Miyabi was inspired to become a *mangaka* at the age of twenty, when he first discovered *G-men* magazine. "I saw Tagame and Go Fujimoto and Keiichi Takasaki. I saw what I imagined gay erotic comics were supposed to look like, but it wasn't just gay—it was also really great manga. I thought, 'I would also love to be in these magazines,' so that's what inspired me to start."

Throughout his career, Fumi Miyabi has worked with a variety of magazine editors. Each artist-editor relationship, he says, is unique. "Some magazines want to meet before I even start drawing and discuss everything from themes to the storyboards, providing some direction. Other times, it's less involved. But each magazine caters to different readers and types of people, so as long as my content doesn't veer too far away from what the main audience wants to see, the editors are OK with letting me do what I want."

While the themes and body types may vary from magazine to magazine, Fumi Miyabi's own taste in men is "pretty broad—but definitely stout and sort of on the fat side." Not too far off from the type of beef *Samson* and *G-men* typically serve





up. Asked if he identifies with the term "bear," Fumi Miyabi hesitates. "When I think of bears, they're pretty diesel. I'm not really that big, so I don't think I'm a bear, but maybe I'm *gachidebu* (fat and stocky). It's complicated."

Atmosphere and tempo are paramount to Fumi Miyabi's writing process. These are the tools by which he strives to establish an emotional connection with his readers. "I guess my *thing* is the speed of the story. I always want to make sure the pace of the conversation is correct—it's not too fast. I want to bring out the emotions of my readers while the plot's advancing, so I slow it down a bit."

It is crucially important for Fumi Miyabi to instill a sense of autonomy in his characters, especially in the more emotional work. He wants their trajectories to be guided by human decision rather than by the hand of fate. "If the plot is that lovers are splitting up, that's obviously a negative feeling, but I want to make sure it's clear that the characters have chosen these actions. It's not like they've been had, or something awful has befallen them."

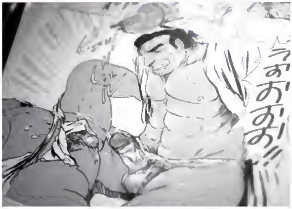
In addition to his finely attuned sense of narrative, Fumi Miyabi is an accomplished visual artist. Paintings and sculpture surround Fumi Miyabi in his workspace. "I think of painting and manga as totally different activities. Right now I'm definitely a manga artist," he clarifies. "In the past I had solo art shows and group shows—I was all over the place. But not so much now. I want to write manga so badly right now. I can always do art, and I think when I'm older and I have more time, I'd like to go back to painting. But for now, it's really important that I keep doing manga. Not to mention, it pays the bills. It's my work."

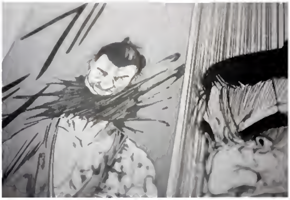
Fumi Miyabi has a day job, but draws a firm line between his two lives. At his day job, the artist remains closeted to his coworkers. "I can't say there isn't any fear of discrimination, though the presumption is that they wouldn't. Still, I don't feel the need to bring it up at all."

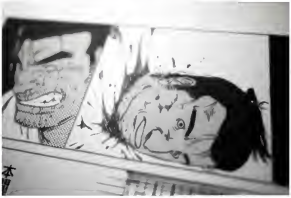
The artists that inspired Fumi Miyabi to follow this path years ago, now follow him on Twitter. "I only started my Twitter account a year ago, but that's my main mode of communication now. Before Twitter took off, I only emailed a few other artists. There's no caucus or community, or anything like that. But I'm sort of a loner, anyway. I don't really like meeting people and going out."

Fumi Miyabi doesn't draw only gay manga. He has a strong comics sensibility, and lately, he's been drawing *yonkama gyagu* manga (4-panel humor strips) for a family-oriented magazine. "They specifically told me I needed to change my pen name, because they can't have an erotica artist doing family-friendly comics." He would like to expand those *gyagu* strips into full-length stories and find further opportunities to diversify his content. "I like drawing girls," he adds, as a case in point. "It's fun to draw girls, too!"

"As far as gay manga, the magazines aren't as exciting as they used to be," says Fumi Miyabi. "So I guess I hope that



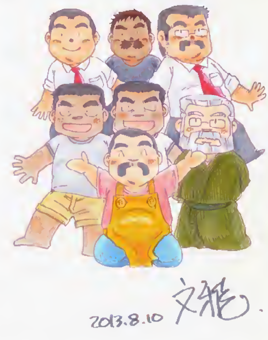


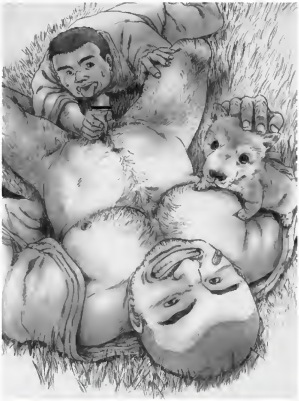


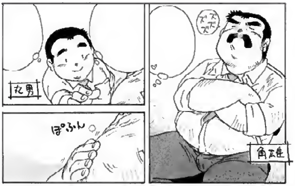
changes, and I hope that my manga can help to make those magazines more exciting. But right now I feel like I just don't have enough time or energy to make that concerted effort."

Part of the issue, Fumi Miyabi explains, is that gay magazines in Japan are fundamentally adult magazines. "So the manga has to be erotic, and it can't *not* include sexuality. It's not constricting necessarily; they're just not meant for more vanilla content. But that's what I want to do sometimes." It'd be reductionist to think of Fumi Miyabi's manga as strictly pornography. "There are stories that can only be told through the manga medium," he notes. "So in that sense, it's about manga foremost, because these are narratives that can only be drawn in that format."

At the end of the day, Fumi Miyabi is driven to do what he does by a deep-seated admiration for the art form. "I love manga, and I'm always happy when I have good ideas that flow into great stories," he says. "I'm always excited when what I'm drawing turns out the way I want it to. It's really exciting when things look the way I want them to look."

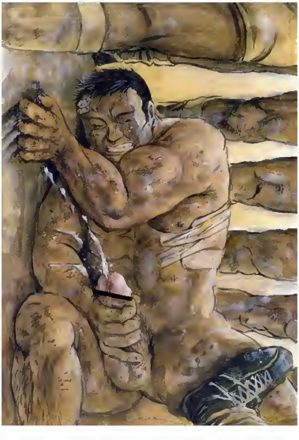


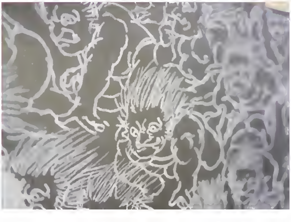


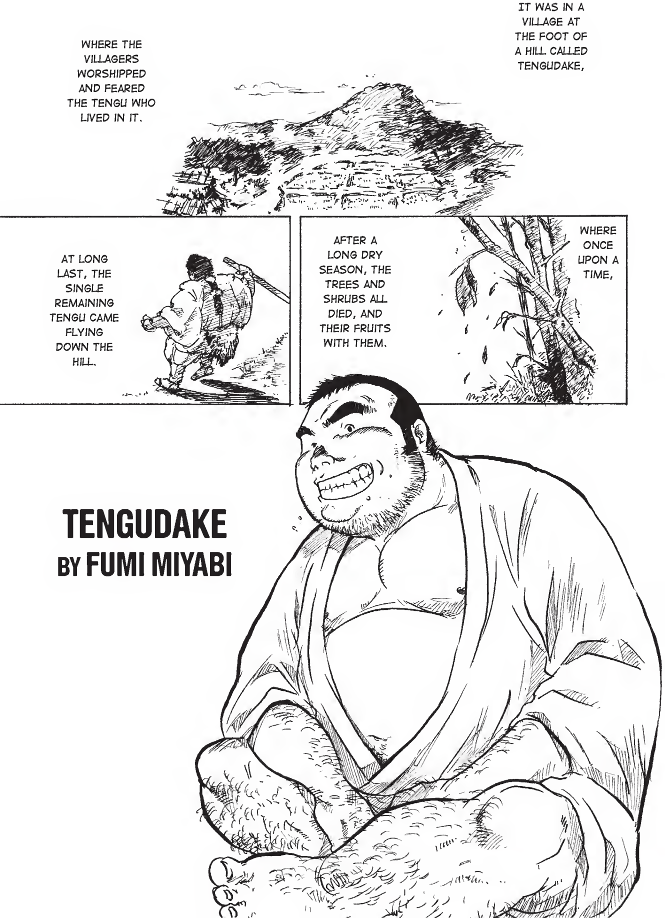


ズズズズズ
角雄
丸男
ぽふん

古事記
熊曾建
文雅

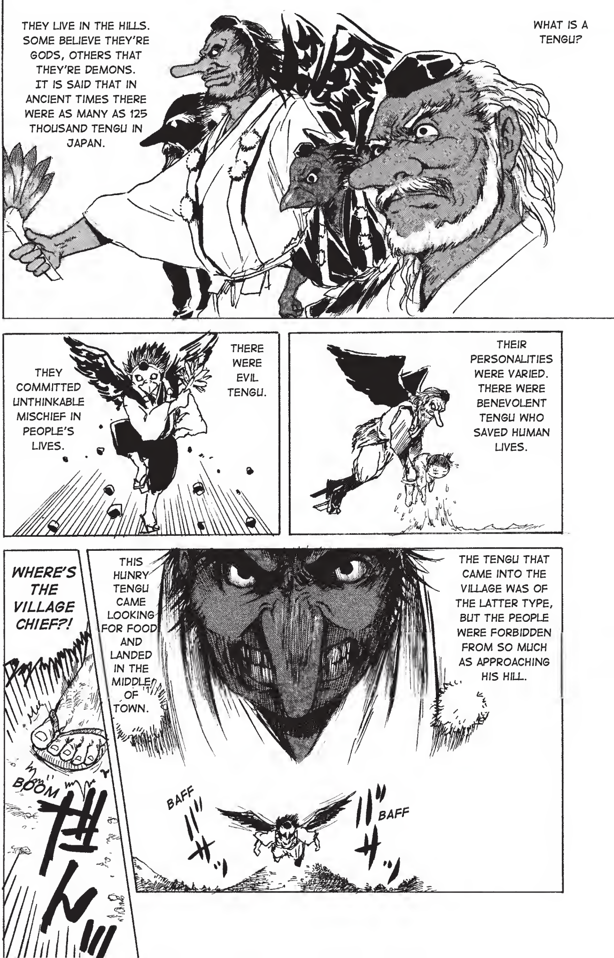


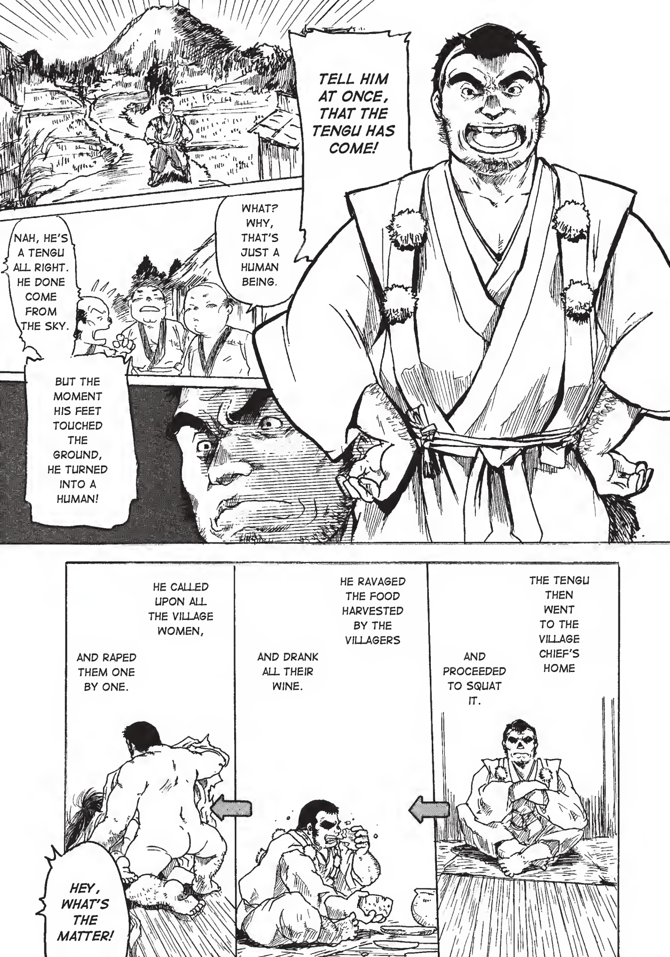


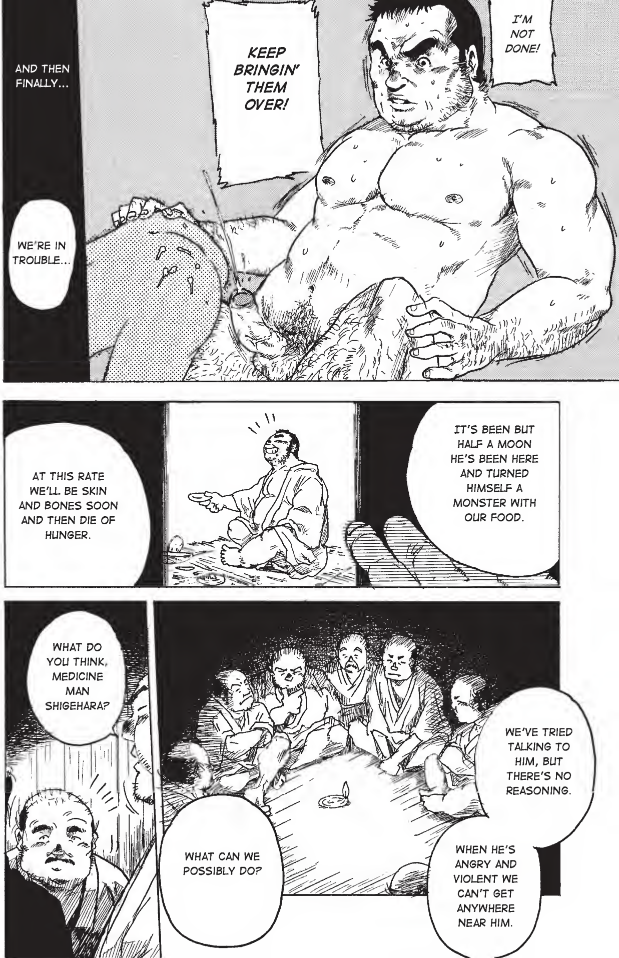

IT WAS IN A VILLAGE AT THE FOOT OF A HILL CALLED TENGUDAKE,
WHERE THE VILLAGERS WORSHIPPED AND FEARED THE TENGU WHO LIVED IN IT.
WHERE ONCE UPON A TIME,
AFTER A LONG DRY SEASON, THE TREES AND SHRUBS ALL DIED, AND THEIR FRUITS WITH THEM.
AT LONG LAST, THE SINGLE REMAINING TENGU CAME FLYING DOWN THE HILL.

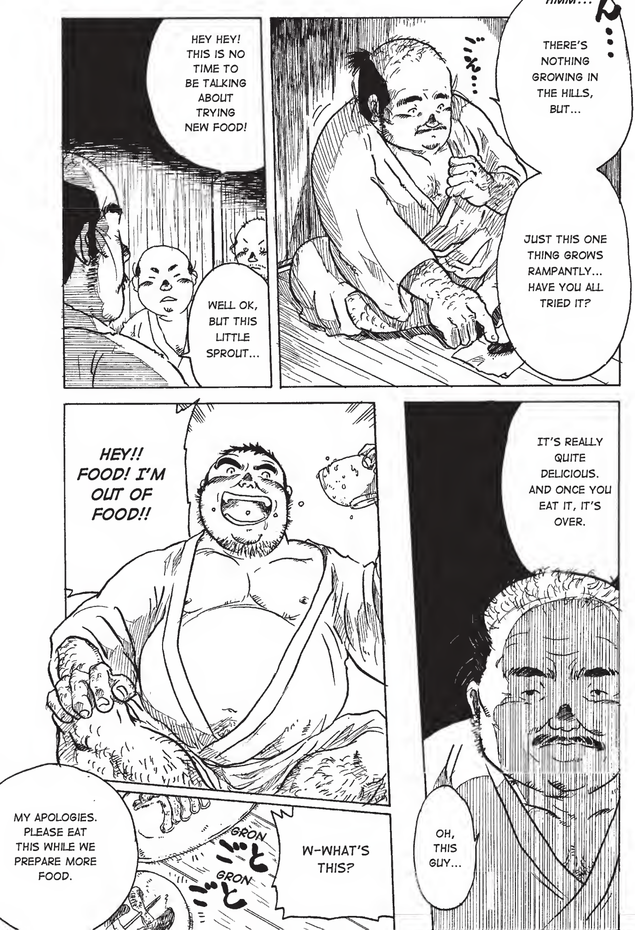
TENGUDAKE

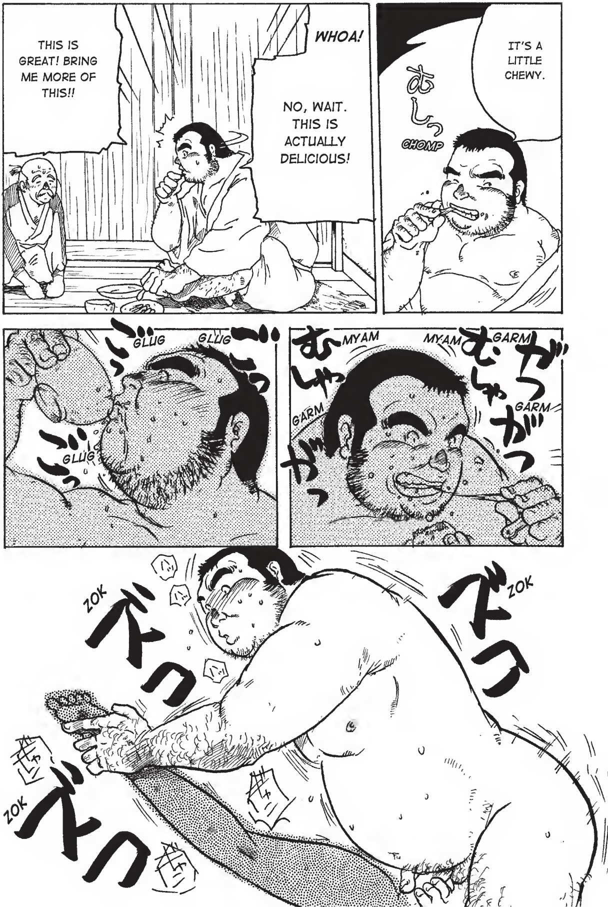
BY FUMI MIYABI

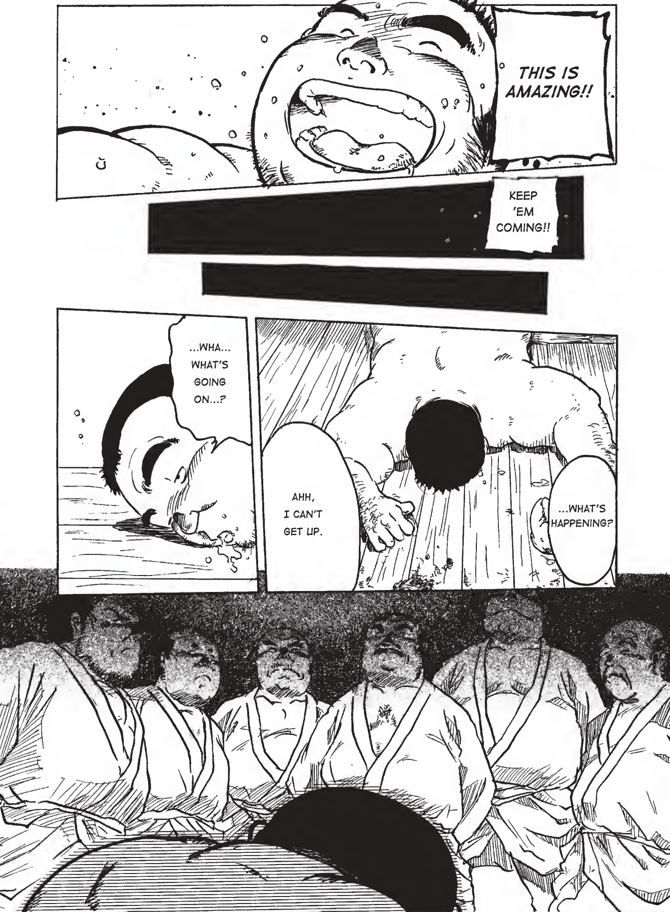

WHAT IS A TENGU?
THEY LIVE IN THE HILLS. SOME BELIEVE THEY'RE GODS, OTHERS THAT THEY'RE DEMONS. IT IS SAID THAT IN ANCIENT TIMES THERE WERE AS MANY AS 125 THOUSAND TENGU IN JAPAN.
THEIR PERSONALITIES WERE VARIED. THERE WERE BENEVOLENT TENGU WHO SAVED HUMAN LIVES.
THERE WERE EVIL TENGU.
THEY COMMITTED UNTHINKABLE MISCHIEF IN PEOPLE'S LIVES.
THE TENGU THAT CAME INTO THE VILLAGE WAS OF THE LATTER TYPE, BUT THE PEOPLE WERE FORBIDDEN FROM SO MUCH AS APPROACHING HIS HILL.
THIS HUNRY TENGU CAME LOOKING FOR FOOD AND LANDED IN THE MIDDLE OF TOWN.
BAFF
BAFF
WHERE'S THE VILLAGE CHIEF?!
BOOM

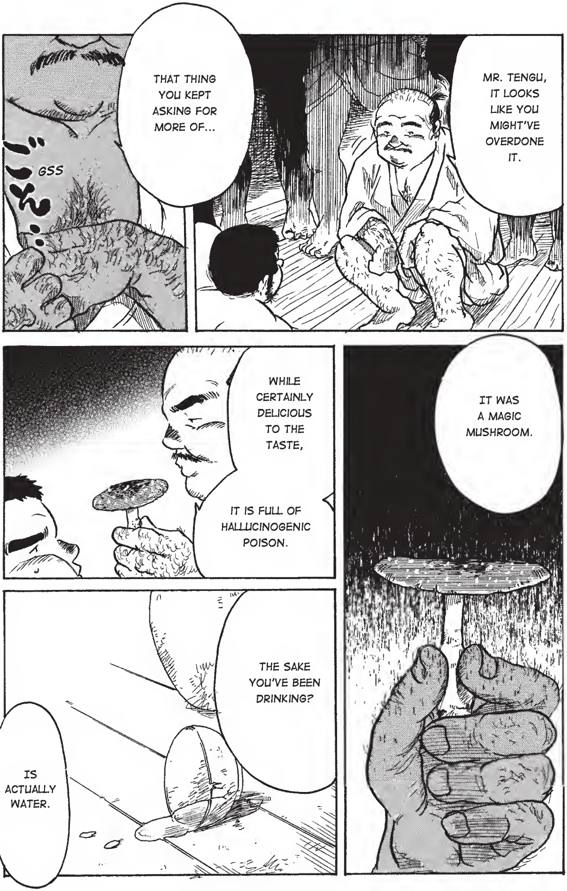

TELL HIM AT ONCE, THAT THE TENGU HAS COME!
WHAT? WHY, THAT'S JUST A HUMAN BEING.
NAH, HE'S A TENGU ALL RIGHT. HE DONE COME FROM THE SKY.
BUT THE MOMENT HIS FEET TOUCHED THE GROUND, HE TURNED INTO A HUMAN!
THE TENGU THEN WENT TO THE VILLAGE CHIEF'S HOME
AND PROCEEDED TO SQUAT IT.
HE RAVAGED THE FOOD HARVESTED BY THE VILLAGERS
AND DRANK ALL THEIR WINE.
HE CALLED UPON ALL THE VILLAGE WOMEN,
AND RAPED THEM ONE BY ONE.
HEY, WHAT'S THE MATTER!

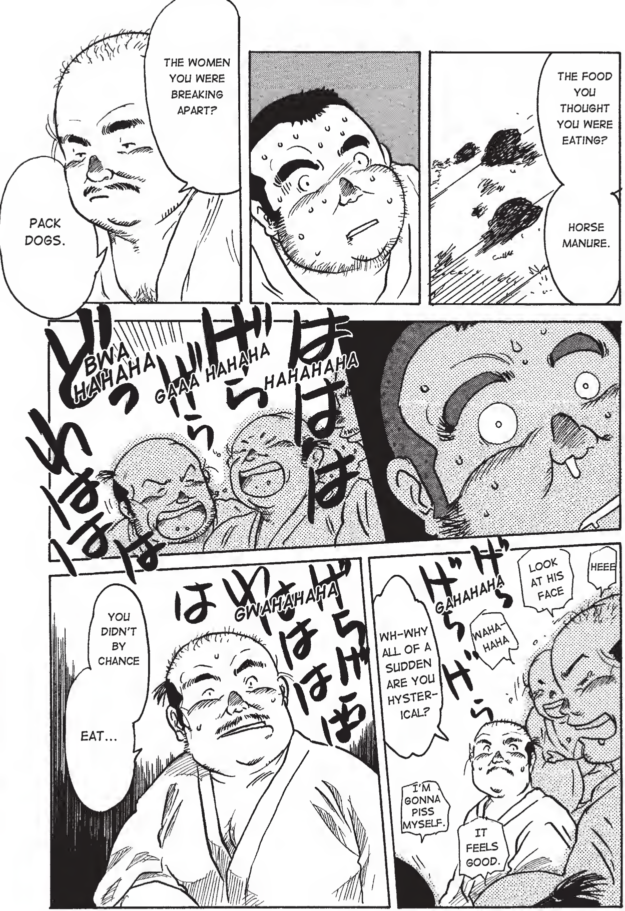

AND THEN FINALLY...
I'M NOT DONE!
KEEP BRINGIN' THEM OVER!
WE'RE IN TROUBLE...
IT'S BEEN BUT HALF A MOON HE'S BEEN HERE AND TURNED HIMSELF A MONSTER WITH OUR FOOD.
AT THIS RATE WE'LL BE SKIN AND BONES SOON AND THEN DIE OF HUNGER.
WE'VE TRIED TALKING TO HIM, BUT THERE'S NO REASONING.
WHEN HE'S ANGRY AND VIOLENT WE CAN'T GET ANYWHERE NEAR HIM.
WHAT CAN WE POSSIBLY DO?
WHAT DO YOU THINK, MEDICINE MAN SHIGEHARA?

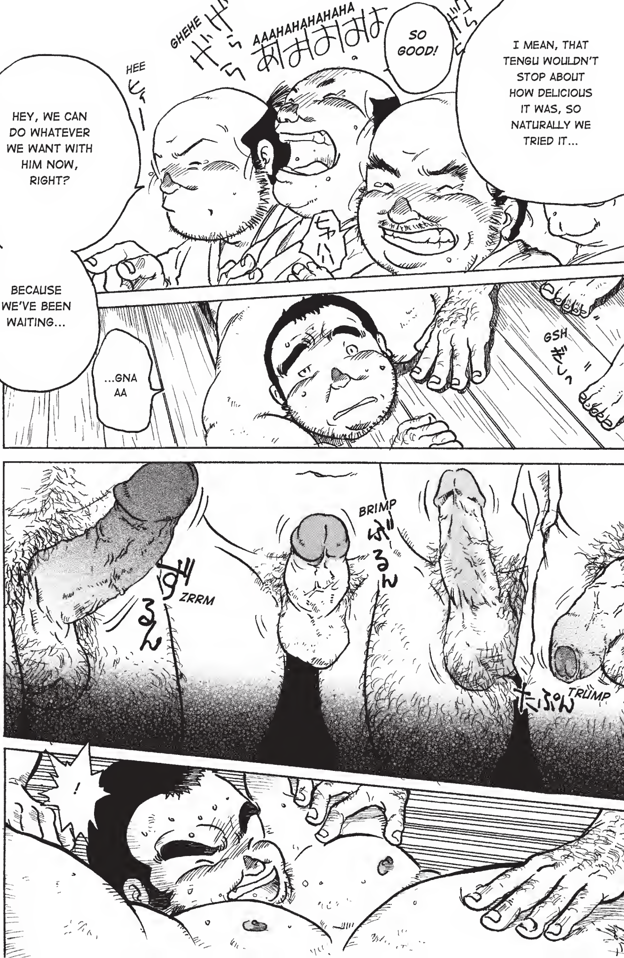

HMM...
じ…
THERE'S NOTHING GROWING IN THE HILLS, BUT...
JUST THIS ONE THING GROWS RAMPANTLY... HAVE YOU ALL TRIED IT?
HEY HEY! THIS IS NO TIME TO BE TALKING ABOUT TRYING NEW FOOD!
WELL OK, BUT THIS LITTLE SPROUT...
IT'S REALLY QUITE DELICIOUS. AND ONCE YOU EAT IT, IT'S OVER.
OH, THIS GUY...
HEY!! FOOD! I'M OUT OF FOOD!!
W-WHAT'S THIS?
GRON ごと
GRON ごと
MY APOLOGIES. PLEASE EAT THIS WHILE WE PREPARE MORE FOOD.

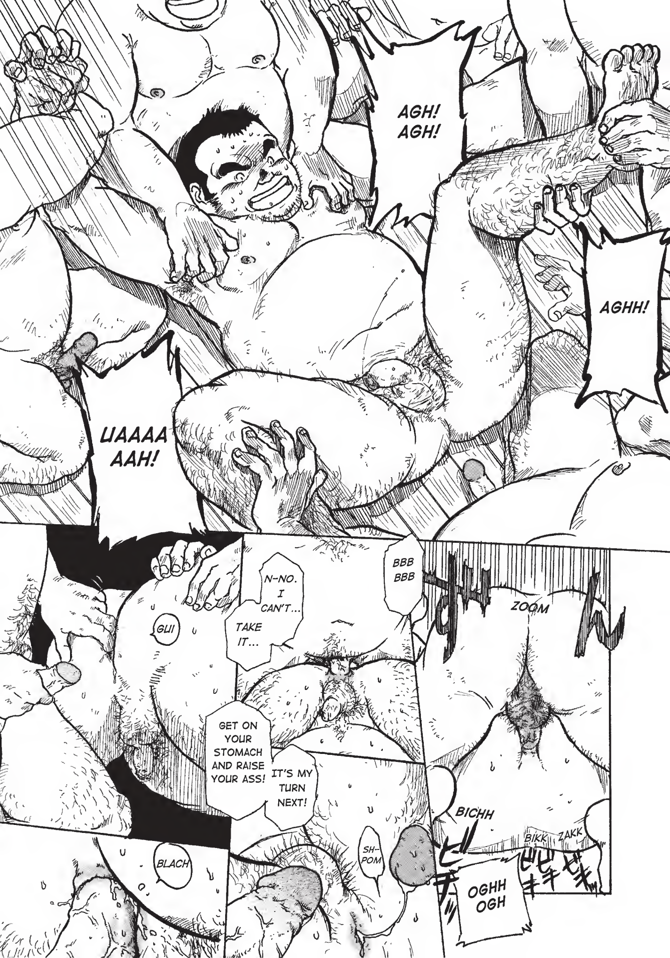

IT'S A LITTLE CHEWY.
むしっ
CHOMP
WHOA!
NO, WAIT. THIS IS ACTUALLY DELICIOUS!
THIS IS GREAT! BRING ME MORE OF THIS!!
がつがつ
GARM GARM
むしゃ
MYAM
むしゃ
MYAM
がっ
GARM
ごっ
GLUG
GLUG
ごっ
GLUG
ズッ
ZOK
ズッ
ZOK
ズッ
ZOK

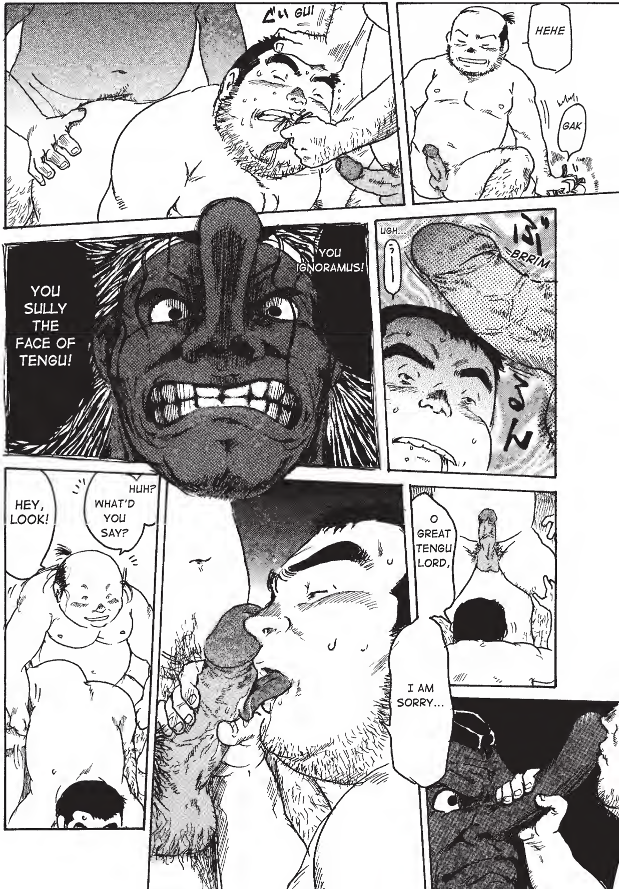

THIS IS AMAZING!!
KEEP 'EM COMING!!
...WHAT'S HAPPENING?
AHH, I CAN'T GET UP.
...WHA... WHAT'S GOING ON...?

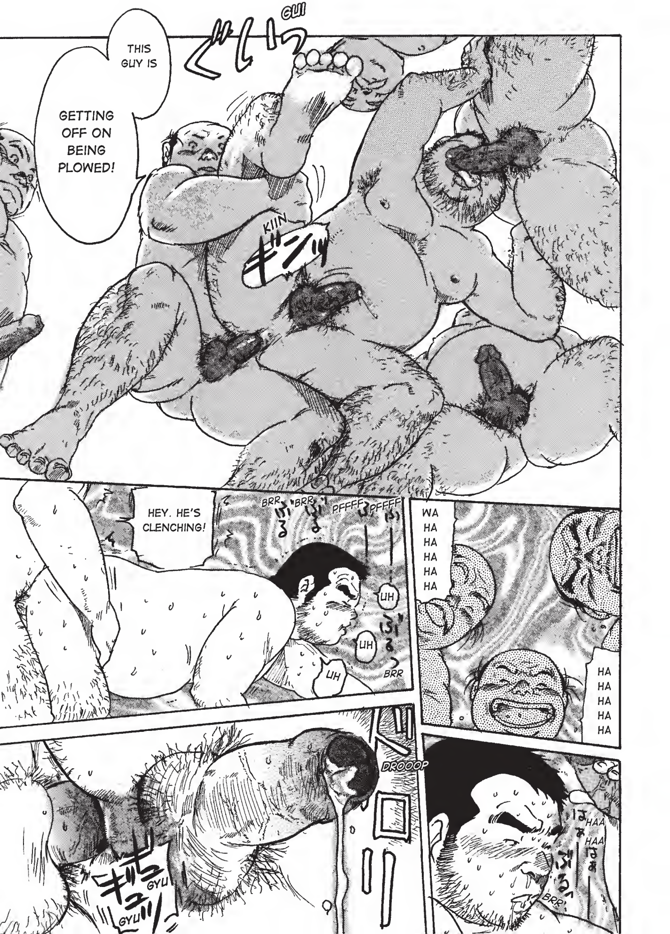

MR. TENGU, IT LOOKS LIKE YOU MIGHT'VE OVERDONE IT.
THAT THING YOU KEPT ASKING FOR MORE OF...
GSS
WHILE CERTAINLY DELICIOUS TO THE TASTE,
IT IS FULL OF HALLUCINOGENIC POISON.
IT WAS A MAGIC MUSHROOM.
THE SAKE YOU'VE BEEN DRINKING?
IS ACTUALLY WATER.

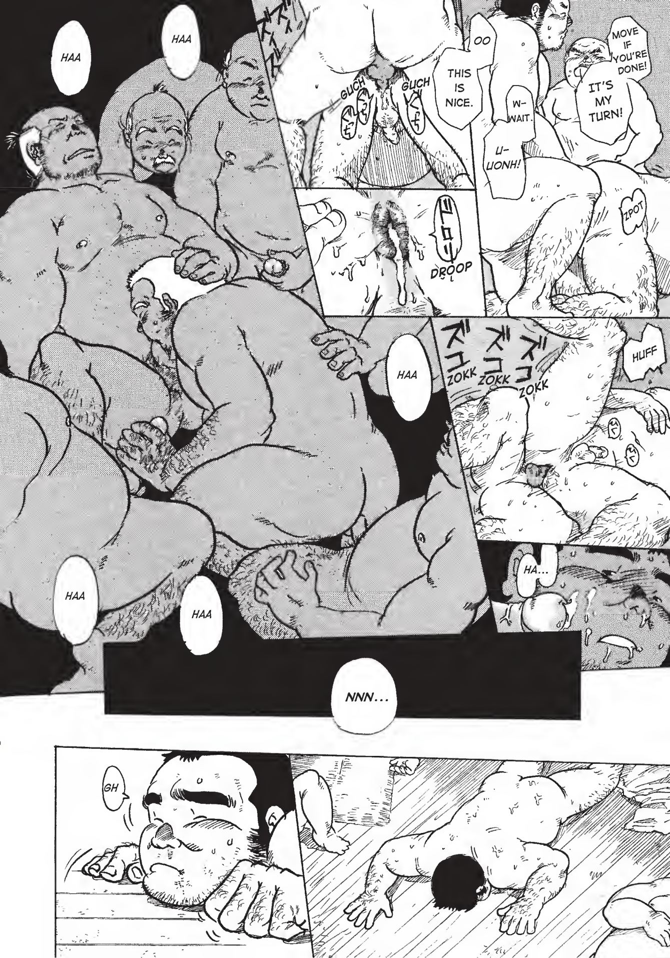

THE FOOD YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE EATING?
HORSE MANURE.
THE WOMEN YOU WERE BREAKING APART?
PACK DOGS.
ははは
HAHAHAHA
げらげら
GAAA HAHAHA
どっわははは
BWA HAHAHA
HEEE
LOOK AT HIS FACE
げらげら
GAHAHAHA
WAHA-HAHA
WH-WHY ALL OF A SUDDEN ARE YOU HYSTERICAL?
I'M GONNA PISS MYSELF.
IT FEELS GOOD.
げらげら
GWAHAHAHA
わははは
YOU DIDN'T BY CHANCE
EAT...

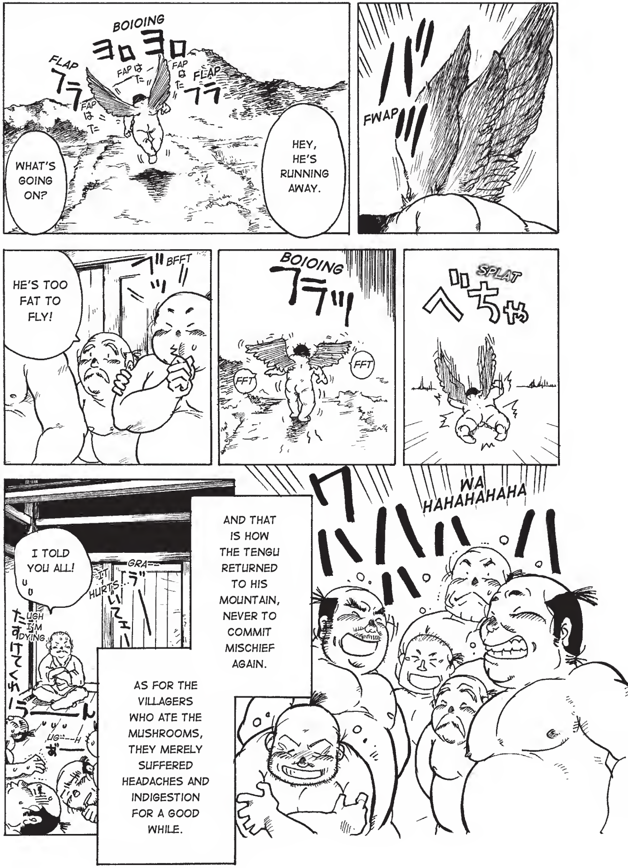

I MEAN, THAT TENGU WOULDN'T STOP ABOUT HOW DELICIOUS IT WAS, SO NATURALLY WE TRIED IT...
SO GOOD!
AAAHAHAHAHAHA
あははは
GHEHE
げらげら
HEE
ヒィー
HEY, WE CAN DO WHATEVER WE WANT WITH HIM NOW, RIGHT?
ヒャハハ
BECAUSE WE'VE BEEN WAITING...
GSH
ぎしっ
...GNAAA
BRIMP
ぶるん
ZRRM
ずるん
TRUMP
たぷん
!

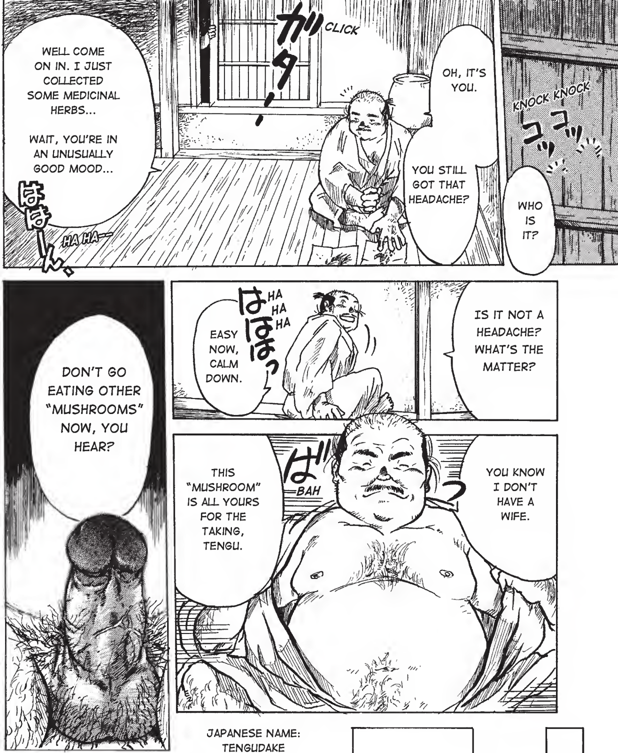

AGHH!
AGH! AGH!
UAAAA AAH!
ZOOM
BICHH
BIKK ZAKK
OGHH OGH
BBB BBB
N-NO. I CAN'T...
TAKE IT...
GET ON YOUR STOMACH AND RAISE YOUR ASS!
IT'S MY TURN NEXT!
SH-POM
GUI
BLACH


HEHE
GAK
ぐい GUI
UGH... うー
ぶり BRRIM
YOU IGNORAMUS!
YOU SULLY THE FACE OF TENGU!
O GREAT TENGU LORD,
I AM SORRY...
HUH? WHAT'D YOU SAY?
HEY, LOOK!


ぐいっ
GUI
THIS GUY IS GETTING OFF ON BEING PLOWED!
ギンッ
KIIN
WA HA HA HA HA HA
HA HA HA HA HA
HEY. HE'S CLENCHING!
ぶる
BRR
ぶる
BRR
ぷー
PFFFF
ぷー
PFFFF
UH
UH
UH
ぶるっ
BRR
はぁ
HAA
はぁ
HAA
ぶるっ
BRR
ドロー
DROOOP
ギュ
GYU
ギュッ
GYU


MOVE IF YOU'RE DONE!
IT'S MY TURN!
OO
THIS IS NICE.
W-WAIT.
U-UONH!
GUCH
GUCH
ZPOT
DROOP
HAA
HAA
HUFF
ズコ ズコ ズコ
ZOKK ZOKK ZOKK
HAA
HA...
HAA
HAA
NNN...
GH


BOIOING
ヨロヨロ
FLAP
フラ
FAP はた
FAP はた
FAP はた
FLAP
フラ
WHAT'S GOING ON?
HEY, HE'S RUNNING AWAY.
FWAP
バ
HE'S TOO FAT TO FLY!
BFFT
ブッ
BOIOING
フラッ
FFT
FFT
SPLAT
べちゃ
AND THAT IS HOW THE TENGU RETURNED TO HIS MOUNTAIN, NEVER TO COMMIT MISCHIEF AGAIN.
AS FOR THE VILLAGERS WHO ATE THE MUSHROOMS, THEY MERELY SUFFERED HEADACHES AND INDIGESTION FOR A GOOD WHILE.
I TOLD YOU ALL!
GRA---
ゴラ
IT HURTS...
いてェ
UGH I'M DYING...
たすけてくれーん
UG---H
おー
WA HAHAHAHAHA
ワハハハハハ


WHO IS IT?
コッコッ
KNOCK KNOCK
OH, IT'S YOU.
ガタッ
CLICK
YOU STILL GOT THAT HEADACHE?
WELL COME ON IN. I JUST COLLECTED SOME MEDICINAL HERBS...
WAIT, YOU'RE IN AN UNUSUALLY GOOD MOOD...
ははーん
HA HA--
IS IT NOT A HEADACHE? WHAT'S THE MATTER?
ははっ
HA HA HA
EASY NOW, CALM DOWN.
YOU KNOW I DON'T HAVE A WIFE.
ばっ
BAH
THIS "MUSHROOM" IS ALL YOURS FOR THE TAKING, TENGU.
DON'T GO EATING OTHER "MUSHROOMS" NOW, YOU HEAR?

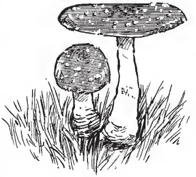
NOW...

THE MUSHROOM CONSUMED BY THE TENGU AND THE VILLAGERS,

IS KNOWN TODAY AS A "TENGUDAKE," AND IT IS BELIEVED CAN STILL BE FOUND ON THE HILLSIDE.

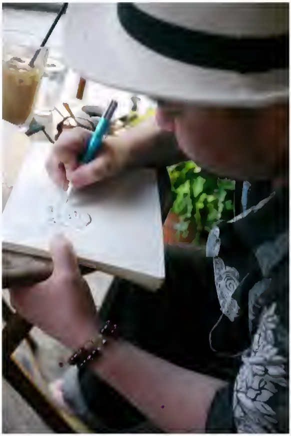
JAPANESE NAME: TENGUDAKE

Amanita pantherina



THE END.

Seizoh Ebisubashi
戎橋政造



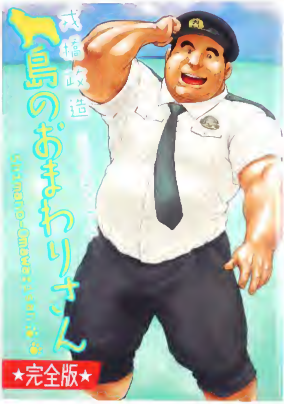
"I write comics for gay magazines, and I've been doing it for about twenty-two, twenty-three years now," Seizoh Ebisubashi tells us, "which makes me an old hand, even though I like to think of myself as still a novice," he adds, with trademark humility. We're interviewing him in Tokyo in 2012, on a park bench at Shinjuku Gaien Park, adjacent to the gay neighborhood of Shinjuku Ni-chome. It's funny to think of someone as accomplished as Ebisubashi as a novice. His manga have been published in hundreds of magazines and collected in no fewer than ten hefty volumes. His blog is a constant stream of works in progress. The man is prolific and a true master of his form.

Ebisubashi comes out of the same late-1980s mass market gay magazine culture that sowed the seeds of Gengoroh Tagame's stratospheric success. "My first publication was in *Sabu* when I was twenty, and that launched my career," he says. "Back then, the genre was still pretty limited and small. There were fewer people drawing. *Sabu* was a monthly magazine, but it was kind of like, if you were in there once, that was it. You wouldn't assume you'd be serialized and pulled into a complete omnibus. It was very disposable, in that sense. Tagame was actually the first one to have a full-length book, so that was a big change."

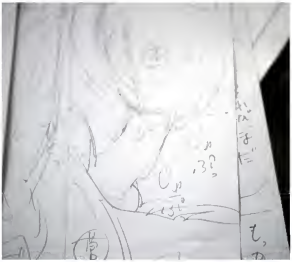
By the time Tagame channeled his newfound success into *G-men* magazine, Ebisubashi's artistry was already on full display. *G-men* issue #2 (1995) contains a gorgeous piece by Ebisubashi entitled "Day Dream." The sensorial short manga depicts a burly, bearded, booted, and bespectacled middle-aged man cruising in the park on a sunny afternoon. Without a single word of dialogue, the *mangaka* demonstrates a sense of rhythm, a cinematic eye, and a preternatural ability to establish sexual tension in the quietest of moments.

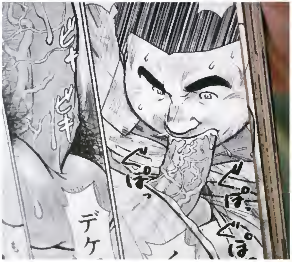
The origin of Ebisubashi's development as a *mangaka* is intertwined with his initial period of sexual discovery. "I've been drawing manga since I was in junior high, and at first it was just sort of typical anime style drawings. Then I started drawing characters that fit the body type that I draw now. Simultaneously, I was recognizing my sexuality, and I knew I was gay at that point, so I started to make gay manga."

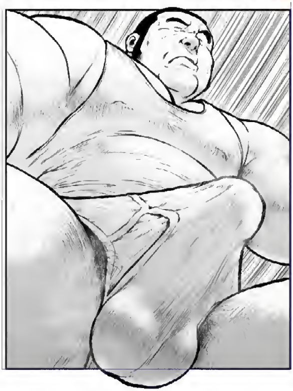
He cites 1984 Olympic judo wrestler Yasushiro Yamashita as an early object choice, and a recurring source of character inspiration ever since. "I totally fell in love with him. That was an original body image love." Yamashita's stocky 280-pound peak build would likely land him in the lightweight division at a weigh-in of Ebisubashi's characters. Their chubby yet muscular frames recall the solidly packed, corpulent bodies of competitive strongmen, sumo wrestlers, shot-putters.


戎橋政造
島のおまわりさん
Shimano-Omawari-san
★完全版★

Shimano Omawarisan (The Island Policeman, 1995)







"I've always drawn the types of people that I like," says Ebisubashi. "Sometimes that's really big guys, and other times it's a skinny guy or an old guy with a belly." His characters tend to work blue-collar jobs: fishmongers, repairmen, beat cops. "I like drawing their clothes, and they're easy to draw. They wear thick pants. I like drawing stuff like that."

These romanticized, rough-hewn men echo the tastes of postwar gay literary icon Yukio Mishima. Kochan, the semiautobiographical narrator of Mishima's *Confessions of a Mask* (1949) recounts a formative childhood memory of feeling choked by desire in the presence of a laborer in close-fitting trousers carrying a bucket of human waste. "An inexpressible adoration for those trousers was born in me," Kochan divulges. "I did not understand why."

When Seizoh Ebisubashi began his career in gay manga, the Internet was only in its infancy. It's transformed the genre completely, for better or worse, over the two decades since. Perhaps one of the more positive ways it's affected artists like Ebisubashi, who started making art at a time when source imagery was no easy task to track down, is that the "amount of visual information on the male body" (to borrow a turn of phrase from Tagame[1]) skyrocketed.

The artist Tom of Finland kept detailed collage boards of reference imagery: the bodies of sportsmen, military uniforms, advertising imagery. Half a century later, Seizoh Ebisubashi has a "materials storage" blog on Tumblr full of reference images: GIFs from porn, photos of naked construction workers, a cartoon of Popeye blowing Bluto, and a smorgasbord of fragmented male body parts. In this way it is like tens of thousands of other gay blogs in the Tumblrsphere: a collage of sexual imagery reflecting the user's individual tastes. Through Ebisubashi's eyes, we can see the potential for these decontextualized JPEGs to become raw material for an artist's creative process.

The speed at which the world's entire visual culture has become available to us (within a few clicks) has its downsides, too. Bootleg scanlations of Ebisubashi's work have appeared in multiple languages. "Obviously my work is only sold in Japan, but I kept finding out about copies made in foreign countries," says Ebisubashi. "I thought, if people are going to take my things or see my work, I should be the one delivering it. That's basically why I have an Internet presence."

Ebisubashi is active on a variety of social networks, through which he offers fans a generous amount of access to his process. He posts screenshots of his works in progress on Tumblr and live-drawing videos on YouTube. "People can only see completed works in my magazines, but I know that there are those out there who want to see the process. Maybe for up-and-comers, if I say, 'This makes it easier to draw,' or 'This is my technique,' it might help."

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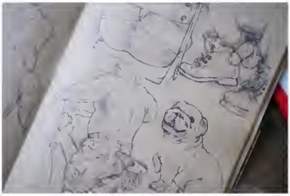
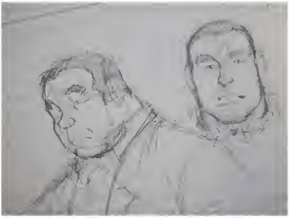
[1] In *Gay Erotic Art in Japan* Volume 2, Tagame describes a similar "explosion" in the availability of images depicting male beauty during the 1950s and '60s. Television brought images of sumo, pro wrestling, and baseball to the eagerly awaiting eyes of gay artists.



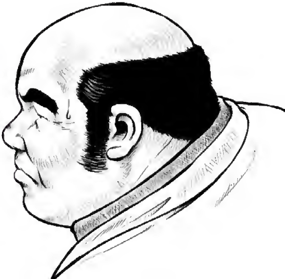


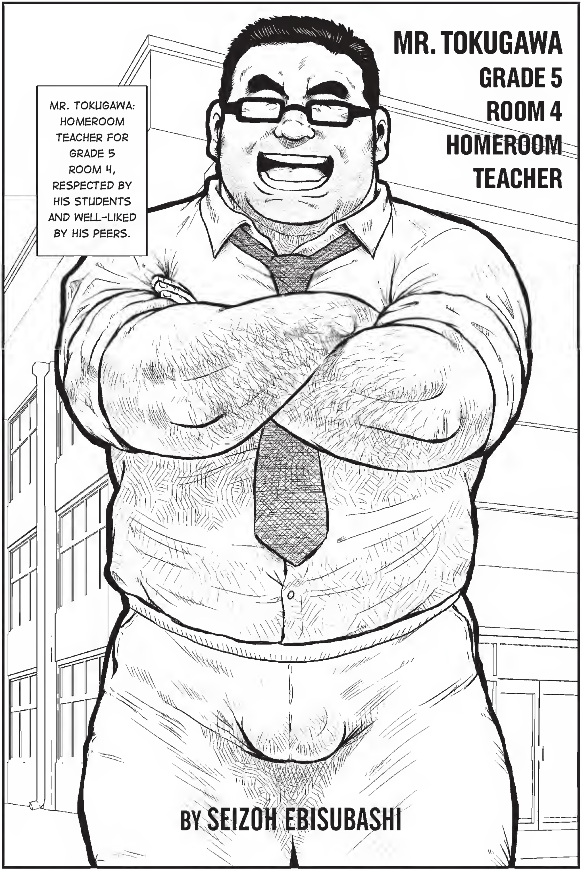
Art has always been the impetus for Ebisubashi's manga. Storytelling, he claims, is not his forte. Many of his longer-form manga are based on novels that are serialized in the same gay magazines that publish Ebisubashi's manga, including those by his frequent collaborator Osamu Kodama.

That's not to discredit Ebisubashi's original writing, such as the brilliant *Burst Beast*—the tale of a shy office worker turned sexual superhero who wears a pair of men's briefs on his face. Ebisubashi also manages to add a personal touch to his adaptations, using his own life as inspiration. "With pieces that are based on novels, it's hard to make connections between scenes sometimes. Novels have unlimited space to spell out things, whereas in manga you have a very limited amount of space. So sometimes, I'll transition with scenes from my own life."

Ebisubashi divides his time between manga and theater. He has a unique relationship with an ex-partner, who writes plays that Ebisubashi directs, sound designs, and promotes. "In stage work, you have to change the music and the lighting according to the highs and lows of the story. In that sense, it's just like in manga: you have to change the lighting and the tone around the various beats and denouement." Between his theater career and manga, Ebisubashi manages to sustain himself on his creative output alone.

Ebisubashi wants to continue doing what he's doing for a long time. He sees the future of gay manga online, where he's recently begun selling his work to fans through the manga portal Digiket. "If the magazines can figure out how to stay on that, they'll survive." He also hopes to see more translations. "Each country needs the writing to be in its own language. The French won't understand something unless it's in French, the English won't understand something unless it's in English. But I try to write things that can be understood without understanding language. I like to think my work almost doesn't need dialogue. You can imagine what's going on by reading the settings and the images. So if you come across a book of mine or my work—don't be put off by the language. I hope you enjoy it anyway."



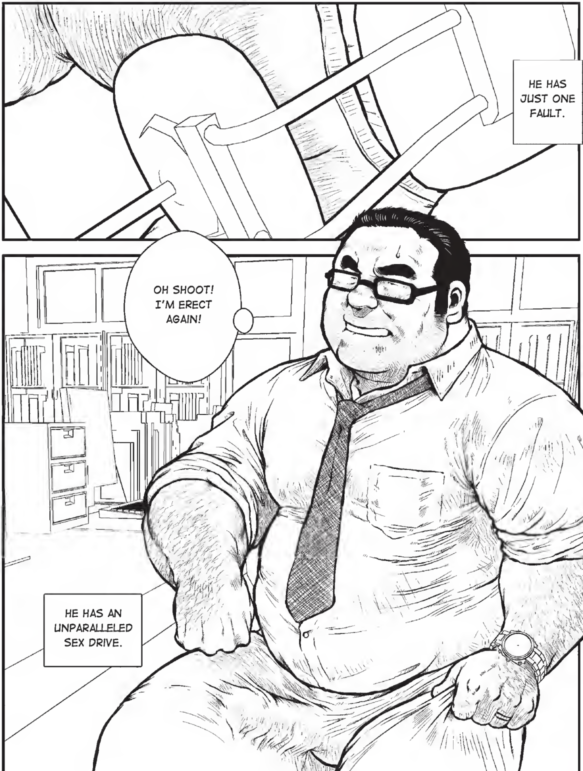


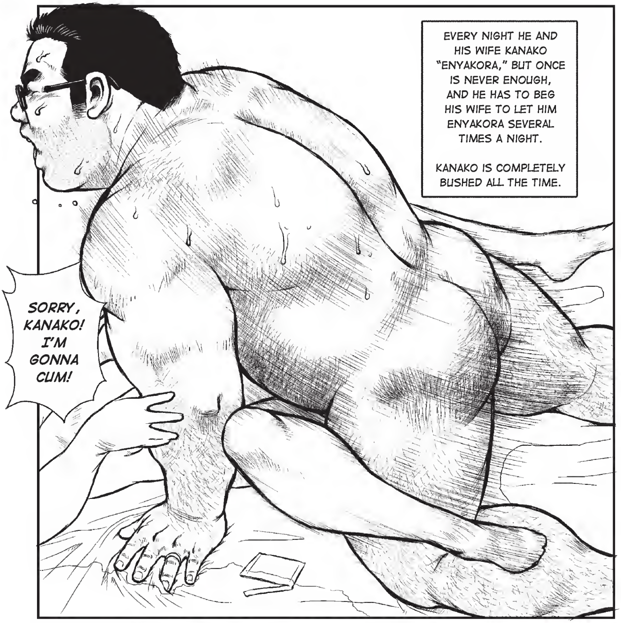
MR. TOKUGAWA

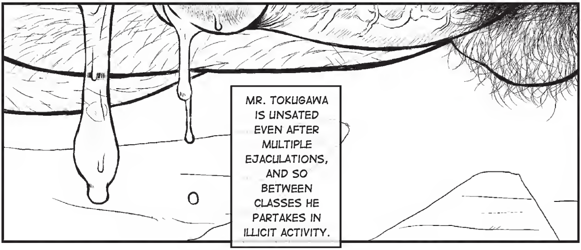
GRADE 5
ROOM 4
HOMEROOM TEACHER

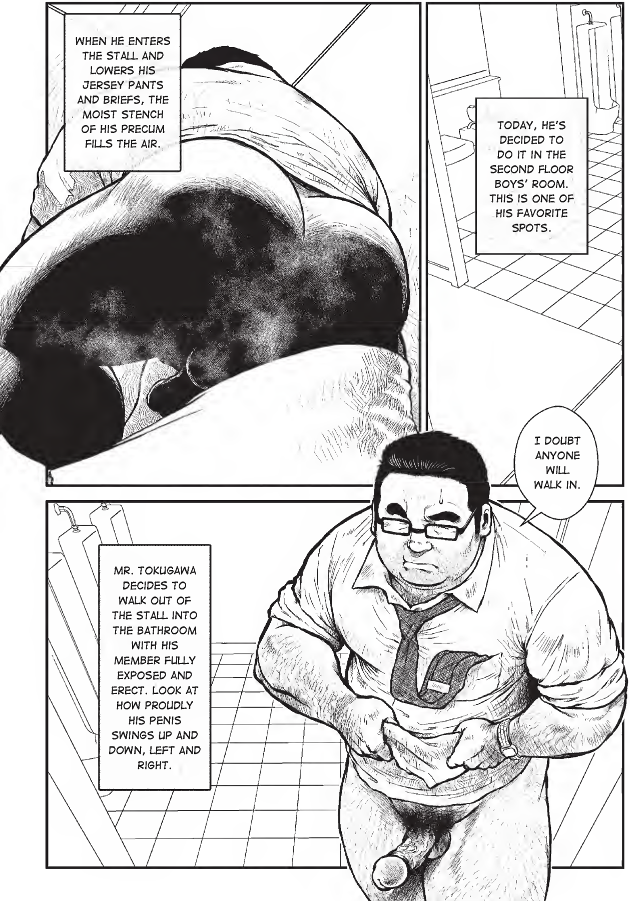
MR. TOKUGAWA: HOMEROOM TEACHER FOR GRADE 5 ROOM 4, RESPECTED BY HIS STUDENTS AND WELL-LIKED BY HIS PEERS.

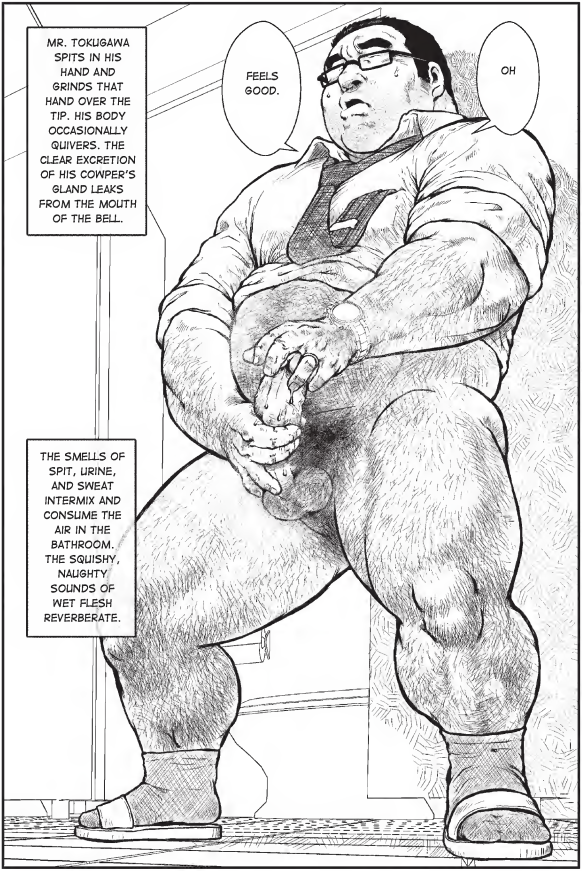
BY SEIZOH EBISUBASHI

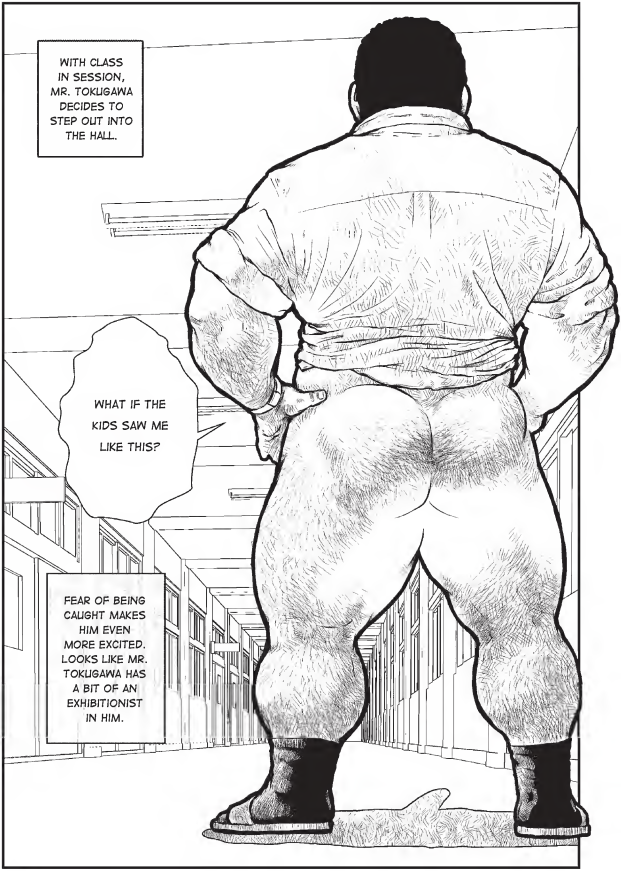

HE HAS JUST ONE FAULT.
OH SHOOT! I'M ERECT AGAIN!
HE HAS AN UNPARALLELED SEX DRIVE.

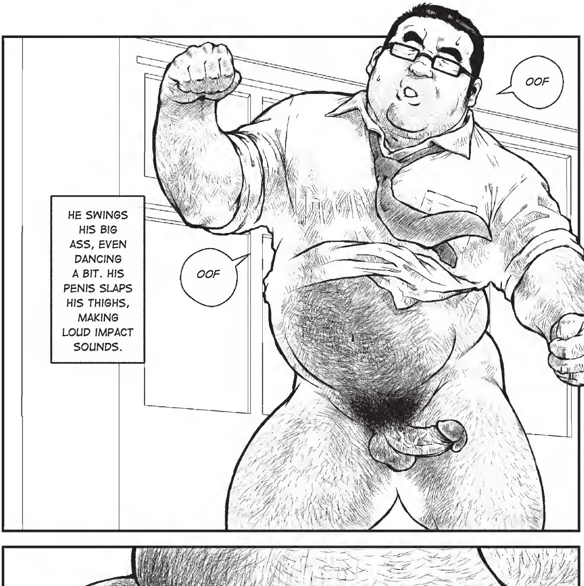

EVERY NIGHT HE AND HIS WIFE KANAKO "ENYAKORA," BUT ONCE IS NEVER ENOUGH, AND HE HAS TO BEG HIS WIFE TO LET HIM ENYAKORA SEVERAL TIMES A NIGHT.
KANAKO IS COMPLETELY BUSHED ALL THE TIME.
SORRY, KANAKO! I'M GONNA CUM!

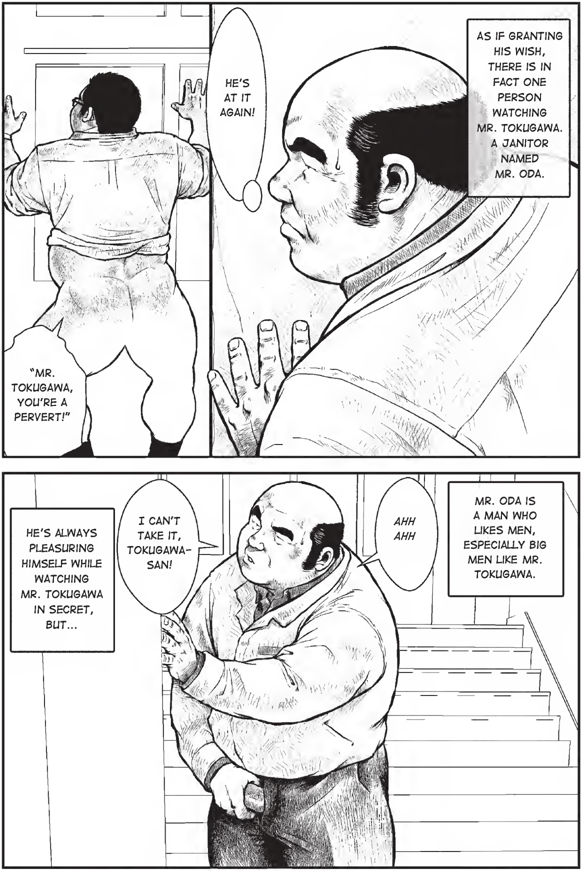

MR. TOKUGAWA IS UNSATED EVEN AFTER MULTIPLE EJACULATIONS, AND SO BETWEEN CLASSES HE PARTAKES IN ILLICIT ACTIVITY.

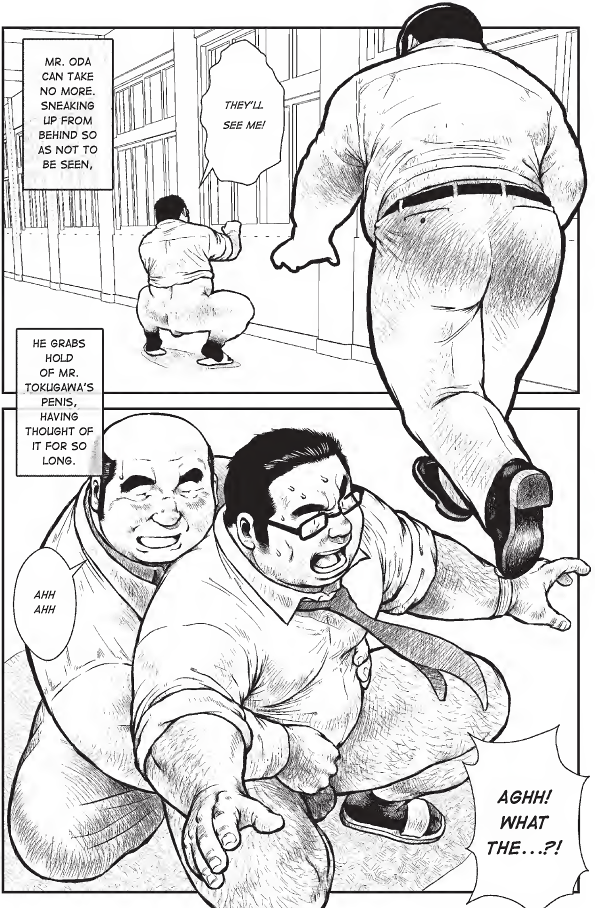

WHEN HE ENTERS THE STALL AND LOWERS HIS JERSEY PANTS AND BRIEFS, THE MOIST STENCH OF HIS PRECUM FILLS THE AIR.
TODAY, HE'S DECIDED TO DO IT IN THE SECOND FLOOR BOYS' ROOM. THIS IS ONE OF HIS FAVORITE SPOTS.
I DOUBT ANYONE WILL WALK IN.
MR. TOKUGAWA DECIDES TO WALK OUT OF THE STALL INTO THE BATHROOM WITH HIS MEMBER FULLY EXPOSED AND ERECT. LOOK AT HOW PROUDLY HIS PENIS SWINGS UP AND DOWN, LEFT AND RIGHT.

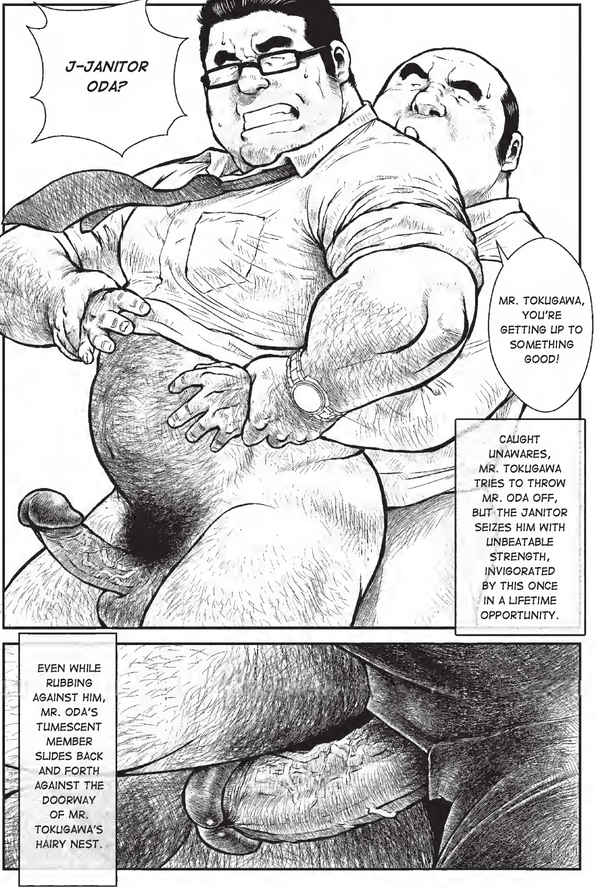

OH
FEELS GOOD.
MR. TOKUGAWA SPITS IN HIS HAND AND GRINDS THAT HAND OVER THE TIP. HIS BODY OCCASIONALLY QUIVERS. THE CLEAR EXCRETION OF HIS COWPER'S GLAND LEAKS FROM THE MOUTH OF THE BELL.
THE SMELLS OF SPIT, URINE, AND SWEAT INTERMIX AND CONSUME THE AIR IN THE BATHROOM. THE SQUISHY, NAUGHTY SOUNDS OF WET FLESH REVERBERATE.

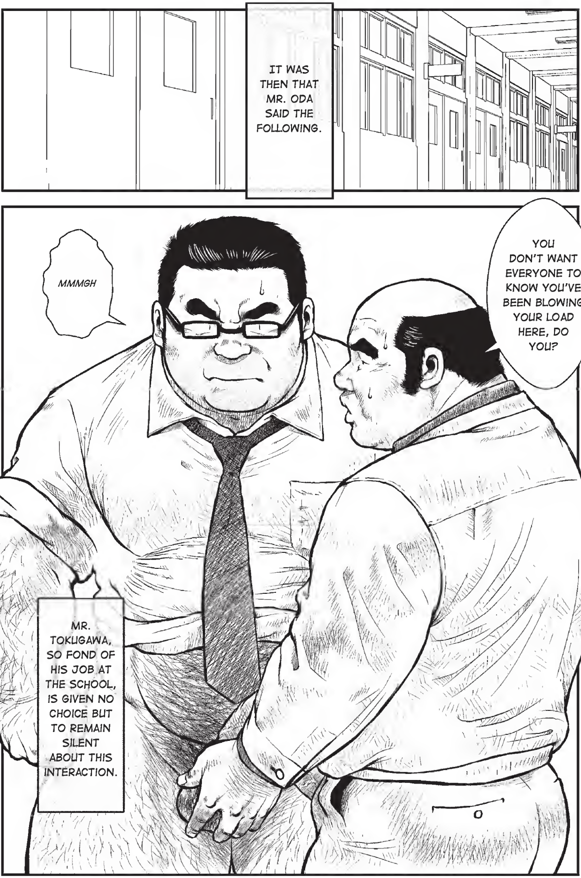

WITH CLASS IN SESSION, MR. TOKUGAWA DECIDES TO STEP OUT INTO THE HALL.
WHAT IF THE KIDS SAW ME LIKE THIS?
FEAR OF BEING CAUGHT MAKES HIM EVEN MORE EXCITED. LOOKS LIKE MR. TOKUGAWA HAS A BIT OF AN EXHIBITIONIST IN HIM.

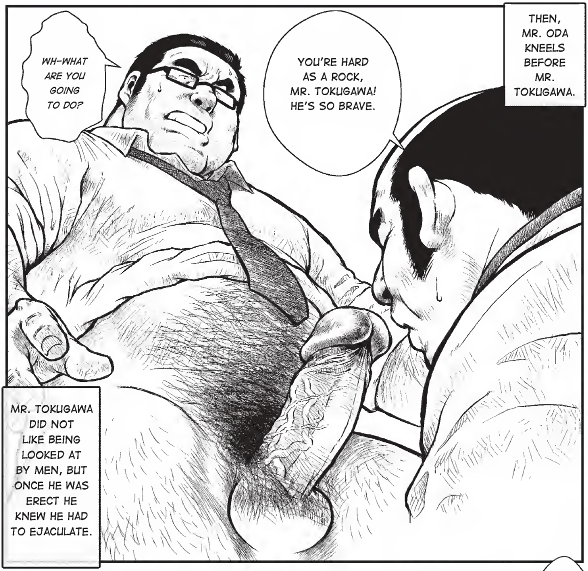

OOF
HE SWINGS HIS BIG ASS, EVEN DANCING A BIT. HIS PENIS SLAPS HIS THIGHS, MAKING LOUD IMPACT SOUNDS.
OOF
HIS ASS LIGHTLY FURRED, HIS ANUS COMPLETELY EXPOSED, HE'S THRILLED BY THE OPENNESS.
I'M GONNA GET CAUGHT! THEY'LL ALL SEE!

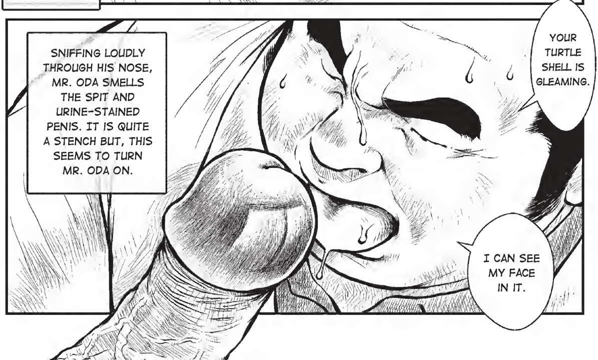

AS IF GRANTING HIS WISH, THERE IS IN FACT ONE PERSON WATCHING MR. TOKUGAWA. A JANITOR NAMED MR. ODA.
HE'S AT IT AGAIN!
"MR. TOKUGAWA, YOU'RE A PERVERT!"
MR. ODA IS A MAN WHO LIKES MEN, ESPECIALLY BIG MEN LIKE MR. TOKUGAWA.
AHH AHH
I CAN'T TAKE IT, TOKUGAWA-SAN!
HE'S ALWAYS PLEASURING HIMSELF WHILE WATCHING MR. TOKUGAWA IN SECRET, BUT...

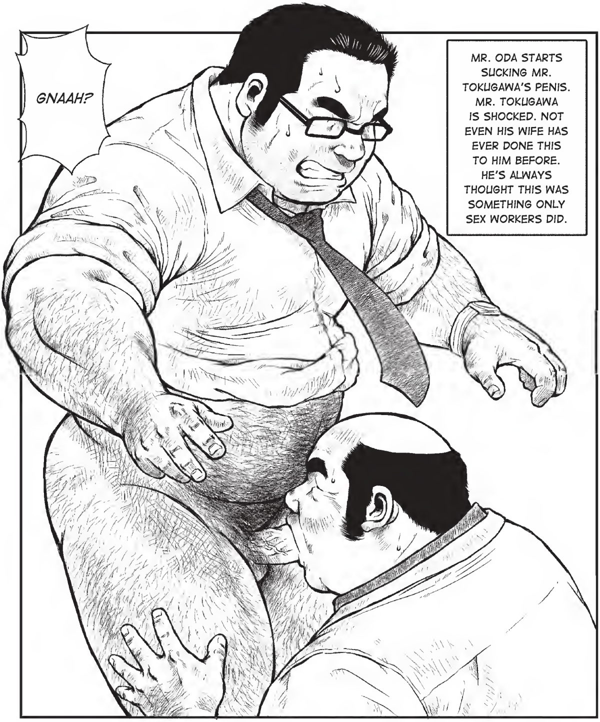

MR. ODA CAN TAKE NO MORE. SNEAKING UP FROM BEHIND SO AS NOT TO BE SEEN,
THEY'LL SEE ME!
HE GRABS HOLD OF MR. TOKUGAWA'S PENIS, HAVING THOUGHT OF IT FOR SO LONG.
AHH AHH
AGHH! WHAT THE…?!

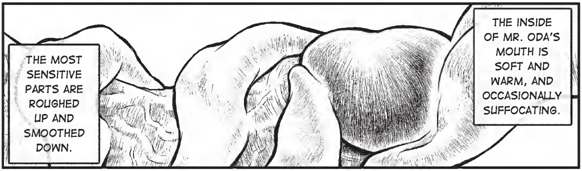

J-JANITOR ODA?
MR. TOKUGAWA, YOU'RE GETTING UP TO SOMETHING GOOD!
CAUGHT UNAWARES, MR. TOKUGAWA TRIES TO THROW MR. ODA OFF, BUT THE JANITOR SEIZES HIM WITH UNBEATABLE STRENGTH, INVIGORATED BY THIS ONCE IN A LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY.
EVEN WHILE RUBBING AGAINST HIM, MR. ODA'S TUMESCENT MEMBER SLIDES BACK AND FORTH AGAINST THE DOORWAY OF MR. TOKUGAWA'S HAIRY NEST.

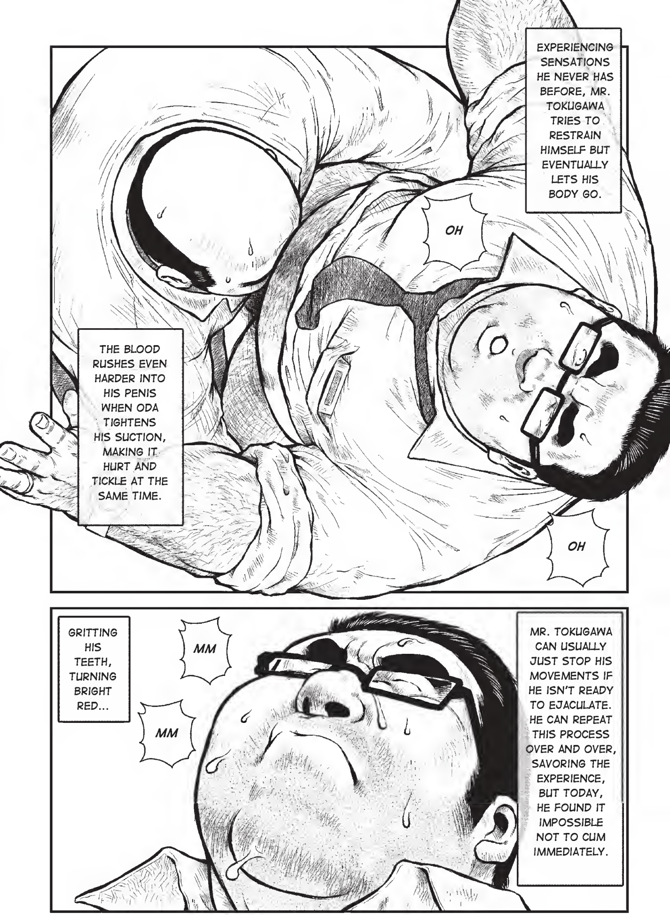

IT WAS THEN THAT MR. ODA SAID THE FOLLOWING.
MMMGH
YOU DON'T WANT EVERYONE TO KNOW YOU'VE BEEN BLOWING YOUR LOAD HERE, DO YOU?
MR. TOKUGAWA, SO FOND OF HIS JOB AT THE SCHOOL, IS GIVEN NO CHOICE BUT TO REMAIN SILENT ABOUT THIS INTERACTION.

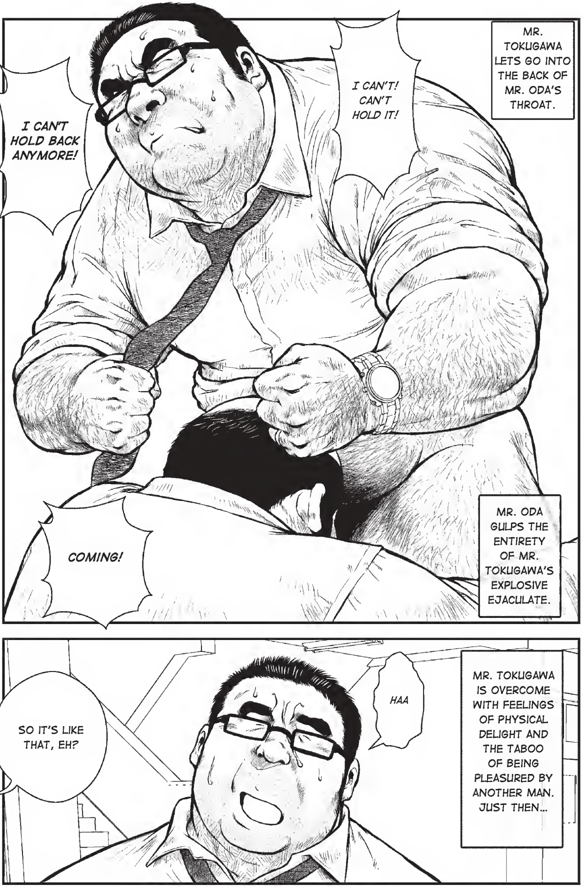

THEN, MR. ODA KNEELS BEFORE MR. TOKUGAWA.
YOU'RE HARD AS A ROCK, MR. TOKUGAWA! HE'S SO BRAVE.
WH-WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
MR. TOKUGAWA DID NOT LIKE BEING LOOKED AT BY MEN, BUT ONCE HE WAS ERECT HE KNEW HE HAD TO EJACULATE.

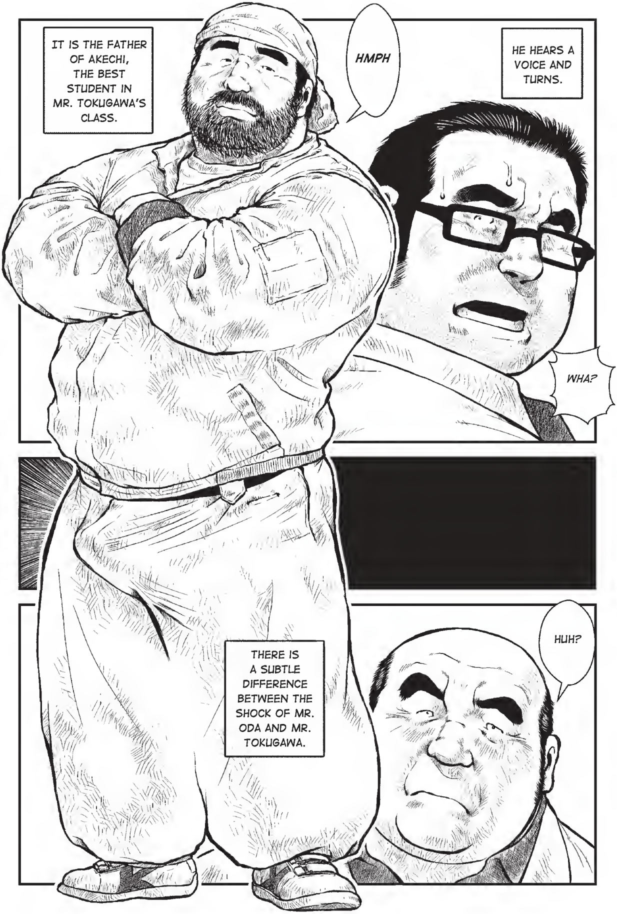

YOUR TURTLE SHELL IS GLEAMING.
SNIFFING LOUDLY THROUGH HIS NOSE, MR. ODA SMELLS THE SPIT AND URINE-STAINED PENIS. IT IS QUITE A STENCH BUT, THIS SEEMS TO TURN MR. ODA ON.
I CAN SEE MY FACE IN IT.

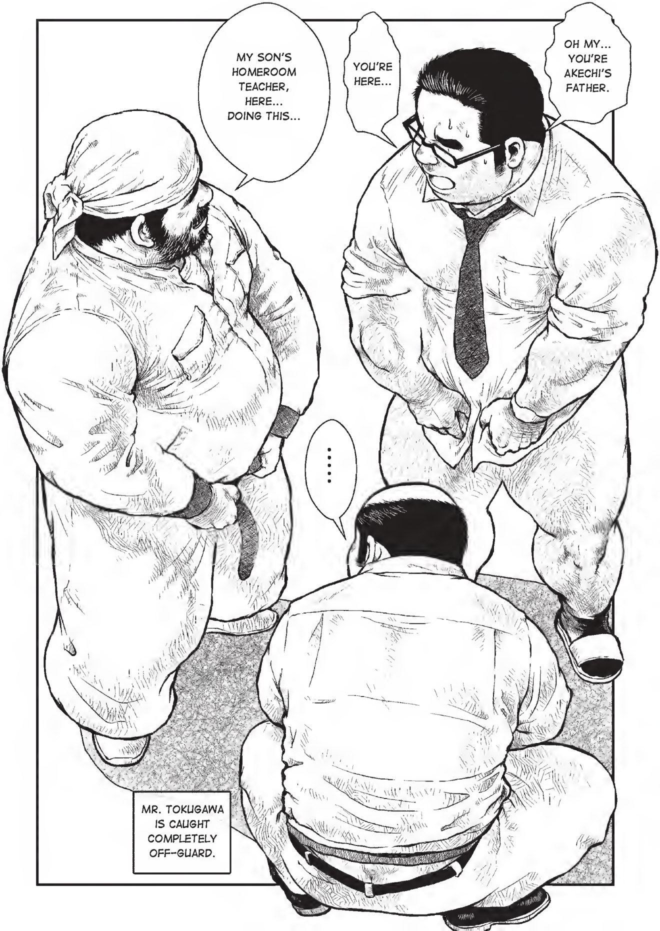

MR. ODA STARTS SUCKING MR. TOKUGAWA'S PENIS. MR. TOKUGAWA IS SHOCKED. NOT EVEN HIS WIFE HAS EVER DONE THIS TO HIM BEFORE. HE'S ALWAYS THOUGHT THIS WAS SOMETHING ONLY SEX WORKERS DID.
GNAAH?

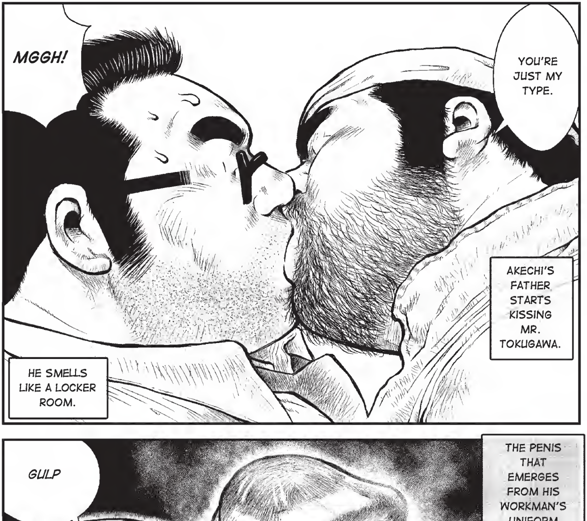

THE INSIDE OF MR. ODA'S MOUTH IS SOFT AND WARM, AND OCCASIONALLY SUFFOCATING.
THE MOST SENSITIVE PARTS ARE ROUGHED UP AND SMOOTHED DOWN.

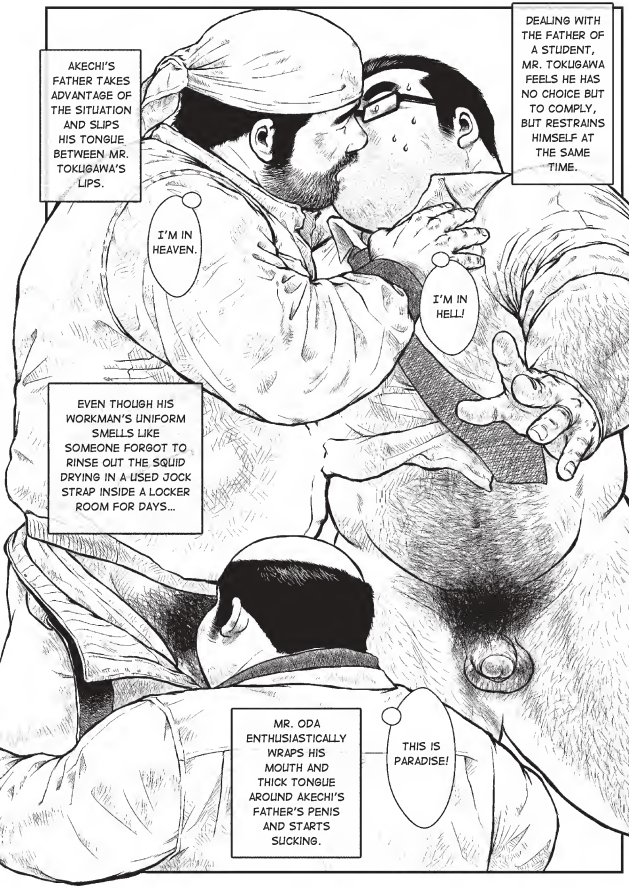

EXPERIENCING SENSATIONS HE NEVER HAS BEFORE, MR. TOKUGAWA TRIES TO RESTRAIN HIMSELF BUT EVENTUALLY LETS HIS BODY GO.
OH
THE BLOOD RUSHES EVEN HARDER INTO HIS PENIS WHEN ODA TIGHTENS HIS SUCTION, MAKING IT HURT AND TICKLE AT THE SAME TIME.
OH
MR. TOKUGAWA CAN USUALLY JUST STOP HIS MOVEMENTS IF HE ISN'T READY TO EJACULATE. HE CAN REPEAT THIS PROCESS OVER AND OVER, SAVORING THE EXPERIENCE, BUT TODAY, HE FOUND IT IMPOSSIBLE NOT TO CUM IMMEDIATELY.
MM
MM
GRITTING HIS TEETH, TURNING BRIGHT RED...

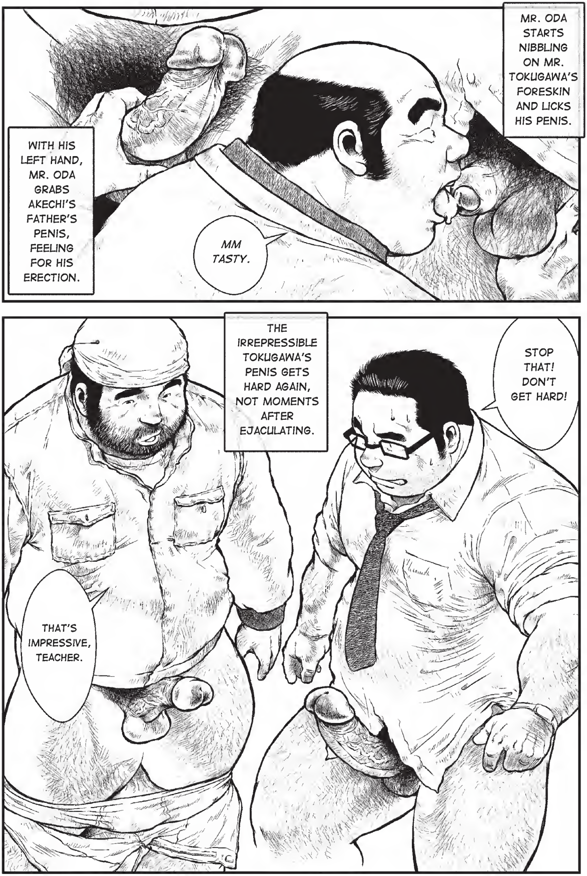

MR. TOKUGAWA LETS GO INTO THE BACK OF MR. ODA'S THROAT.
I CAN'T! CAN'T HOLD IT!
I CAN'T HOLD BACK ANYMORE!
MR. ODA GULPS THE ENTIRETY OF MR. TOKUGAWA'S EXPLOSIVE EJACULATE.
COMING!
MR. TOKUGAWA IS OVERCOME WITH FEELINGS OF PHYSICAL DELIGHT AND THE TABOO OF BEING PLEASURED BY ANOTHER MAN. JUST THEN...
HAA
SO IT'S LIKE THAT, EH?

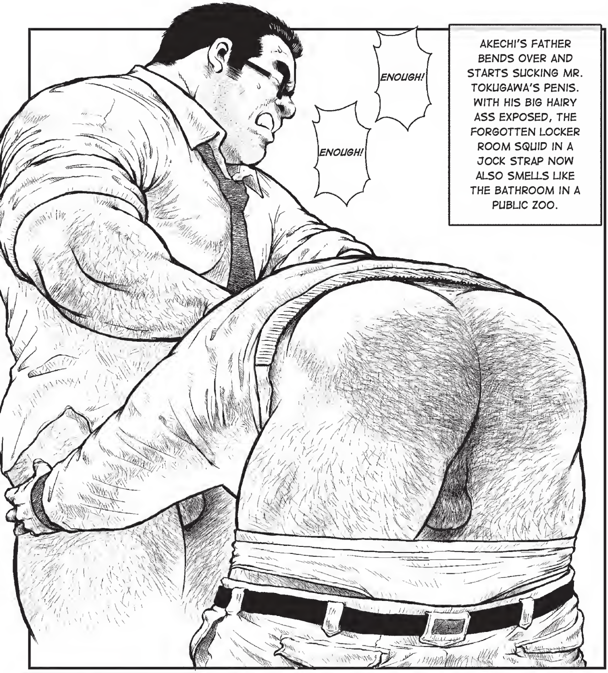

HE HEARS A VOICE AND TURNS.
WHA?
HMPH
IT IS THE FATHER OF AKECHI, THE BEST STUDENT IN MR. TOKUGAWA'S CLASS.
HUH?
THERE IS A SUBTLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE SHOCK OF MR. ODA AND MR. TOKUGAWA.

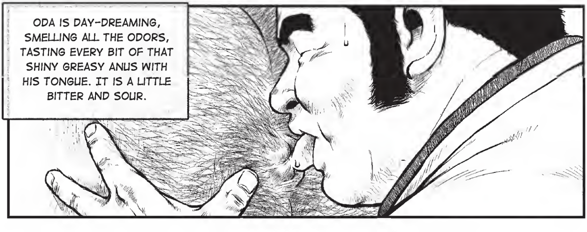

OH MY... YOU'RE AKECHI'S FATHER.
YOU'RE HERE...
MY SON'S HOMEROOM TEACHER, HERE... DOING THIS...
......
MR. TOKUGAWA IS CAUGHT COMPLETELY OFF-GUARD.

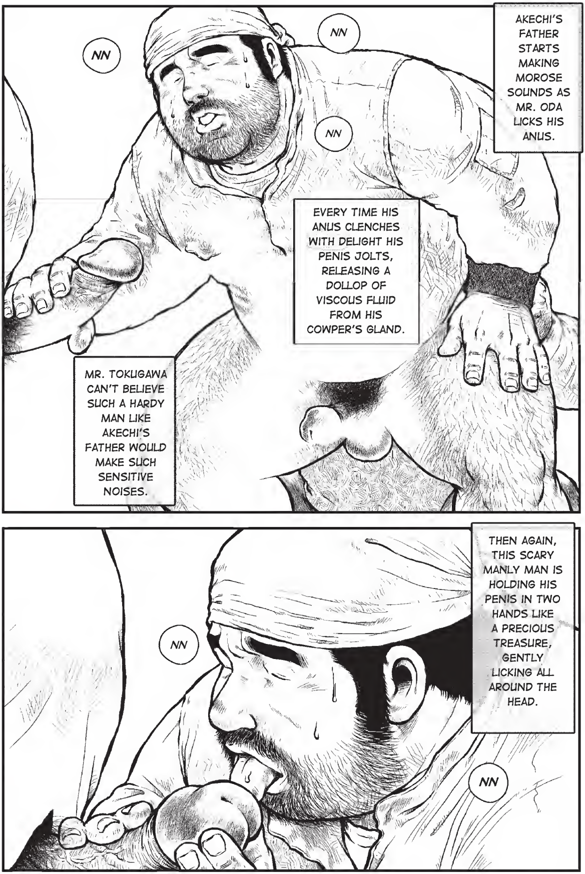

YOU'RE JUST MY TYPE.
MGGH!
AKECHI'S FATHER STARTS KISSING MR. TOKUGAWA.
HE SMELLS LIKE A LOCKER ROOM.
THE PENIS THAT EMERGES FROM HIS WORKMAN'S UNIFORM SMELLS AS IF SOMEONE WERE DRYING SQUID IN THAT LOCKER ROOM.
GULP
PREDICTABLY, MR. ODA'S REACTION WAS QUITE DIFFERENT FROM MR. TOKUGAWA'S.

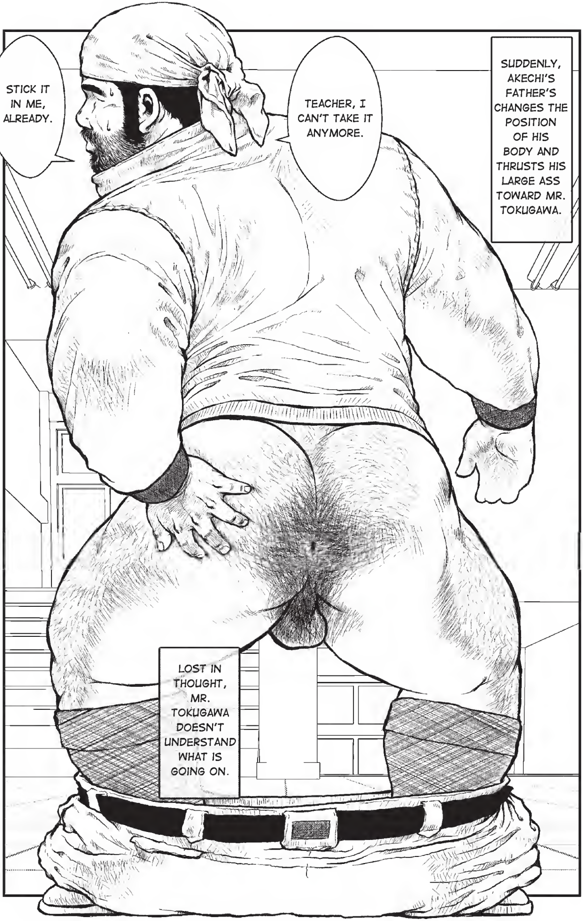

AKECHI'S FATHER TAKES ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION AND SLIPS HIS TONGUE BETWEEN MR. TOKUGAWA'S LIPS.
DEALING WITH THE FATHER OF A STUDENT, MR. TOKUGAWA FEELS HE HAS NO CHOICE BUT TO COMPLY, BUT RESTRAINS HIMSELF AT THE SAME TIME.
I'M IN HEAVEN.
I'M IN HELL!
EVEN THOUGH HIS WORKMAN'S UNIFORM SMELLS LIKE SOMEONE FORGOT TO RINSE OUT THE SQUID DRYING IN A USED JOCK STRAP INSIDE A LOCKER ROOM FOR DAYS...
MR. ODA ENTHUSIASTICALLY WRAPS HIS MOUTH AND THICK TONGUE AROUND AKECHI'S FATHER'S PENIS AND STARTS SUCKING.
THIS IS PARADISE!

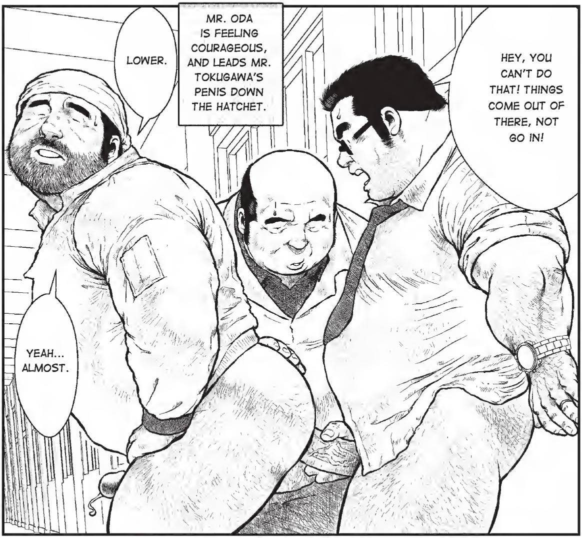

MR. ODA STARTS NIBBLING ON MR. TOKUGAWA'S FORESKIN AND LICKS HIS PENIS.
WITH HIS LEFT HAND, MR. ODA GRABS AKECHI'S FATHER'S PENIS, FEELING FOR HIS ERECTION.
MM TASTY.
THE IRREPRESSIBLE TOKUGAWA'S PENIS GETS HARD AGAIN, NOT MOMENTS AFTER EJACULATING.
STOP THAT! DON'T GET HARD!
THAT'S IMPRESSIVE, TEACHER.

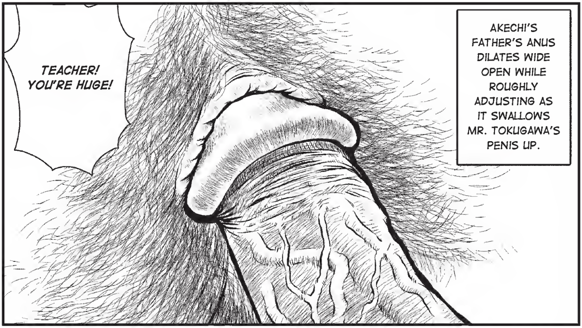

AKECHI'S FATHER BENDS OVER AND STARTS SUCKING MR. TOKUGAWA'S PENIS. WITH HIS BIG HAIRY ASS EXPOSED, THE FORGOTTEN LOCKER ROOM SQUID IN A JOCK STRAP NOW ALSO SMELLS LIKE THE BATHROOM IN A PUBLIC ZOO.
ENOUGH!
ENOUGH!

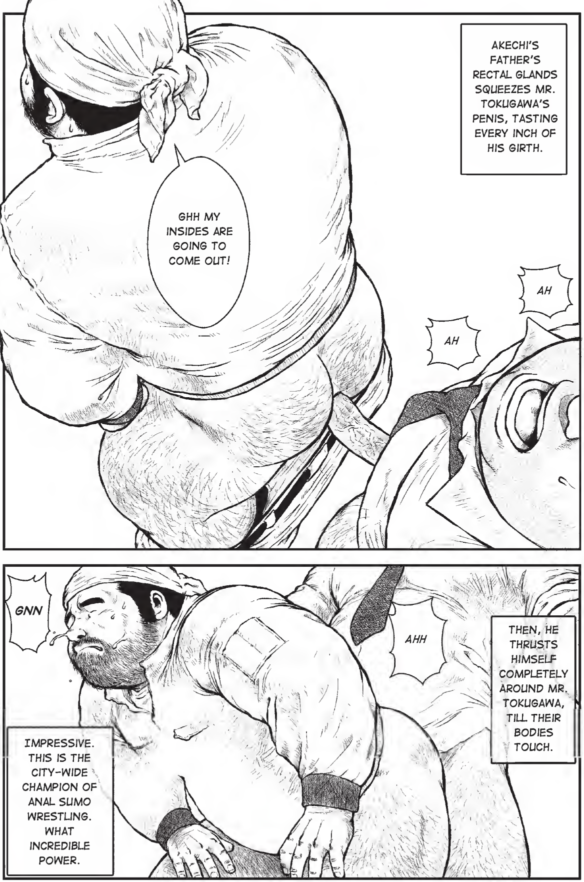

ODA IS DAY-DREAMING, SMELLING ALL THE ODORS, TASTING EVERY BIT OF THAT SHINY GREASY ANUS WITH HIS TONGUE. IT IS A LITTLE BITTER AND SOUR.

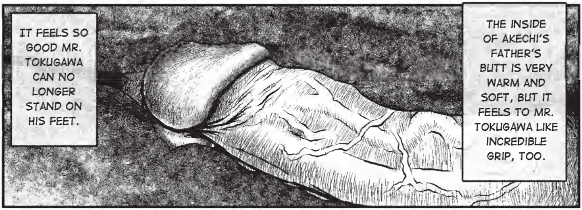

AKECHI'S FATHER STARTS MAKING MOROSE SOUNDS AS MR. ODA LICKS HIS ANUS.
NN
NN
NN
EVERY TIME HIS ANUS CLENCHES WITH DELIGHT HIS PENIS JOLTS, RELEASING A DOLLOP OF VISCOUS FLUID FROM HIS COWPER'S GLAND.
MR. TOKUGAWA CAN'T BELIEVE SUCH A HARDY MAN LIKE AKECHI'S FATHER WOULD MAKE SUCH SENSITIVE NOISES.
THEN AGAIN, THIS SCARY MANLY MAN IS HOLDING HIS PENIS IN TWO HANDS LIKE A PRECIOUS TREASURE, GENTLY LICKING ALL AROUND THE HEAD.
NN
NN

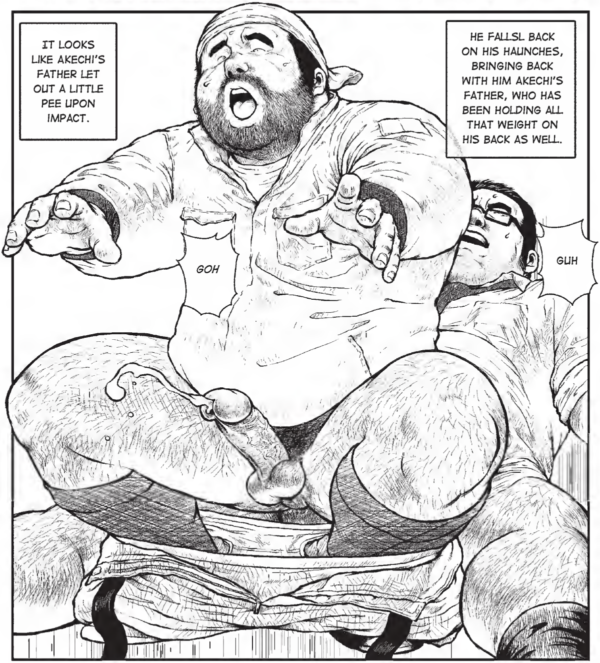

SUDDENLY, AKECHI'S FATHER'S CHANGES THE POSITION OF HIS BODY AND THRUSTS HIS LARGE ASS TOWARD MR. TOKUGAWA.
TEACHER, I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE.
STICK IT IN ME, ALREADY.
LOST IN THOUGHT, MR. TOKUGAWA DOESN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT IS GOING ON.

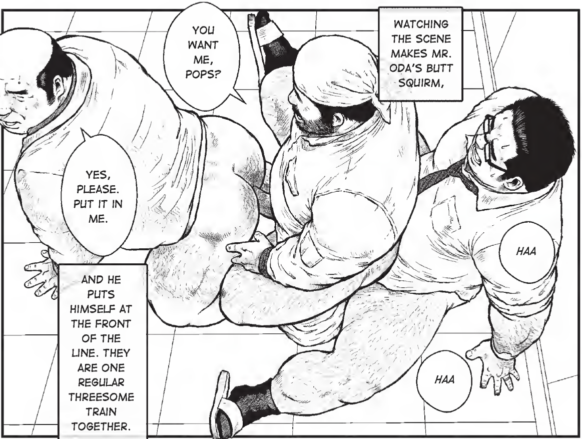

HEY, YOU CAN'T DO THAT! THINGS COME OUT OF THERE, NOT GO IN!
MR. ODA IS FEELING COURAGEOUS, AND LEADS MR. TOKUGAWA'S PENIS DOWN THE HATCHET.
LOWER.
YEAH... ALMOST.

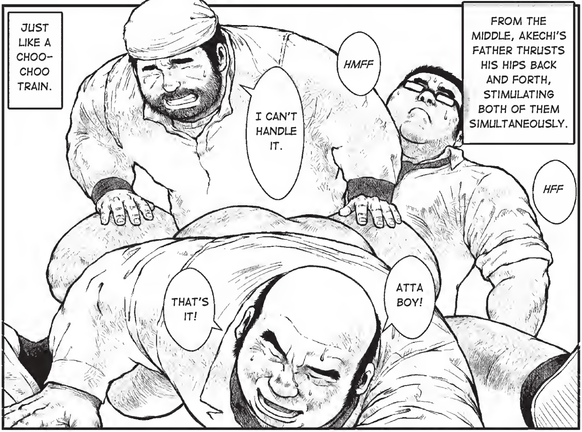

AKECHI'S FATHER'S ANUS DILATES WIDE OPEN WHILE ROUGHLY ADJUSTING AS IT SWALLOWS MR. TOKUGAWA'S PENIS UP.
TEACHER! YOU'RE HUGE!

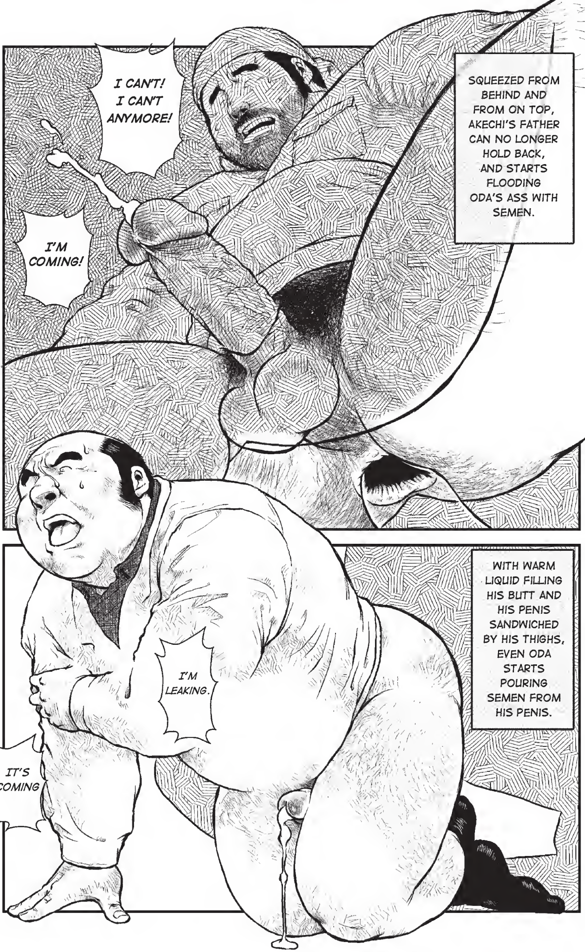

AKECHI'S FATHER'S RECTAL GLANDS SQUEEZES MR. TOKUGAWA'S PENIS, TASTING EVERY INCH OF HIS GIRTH.
GHH MY INSIDES ARE GOING TO COME OUT!
AH
AH
GNN
AHH
THEN, HE THRUSTS HIMSELF COMPLETELY AROUND MR. TOKUGAWA, TILL THEIR BODIES TOUCH.
IMPRESSIVE. THIS IS THE CITY-WIDE CHAMPION OF ANAL SUMO WRESTLING. WHAT INCREDIBLE POWER.

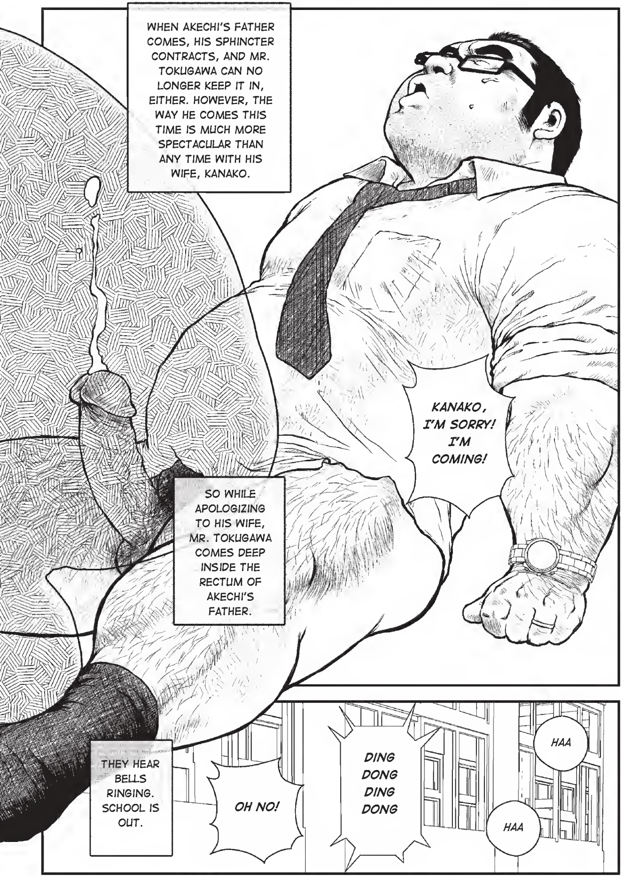

THE INSIDE OF AKECHI'S FATHER'S BUTT IS VERY WARM AND SOFT, BUT IT FEELS TO MR. TOKUGAWA LIKE INCREDIBLE GRIP, TOO.
IT FEELS SO GOOD MR. TOKUGAWA CAN NO LONGER STAND ON HIS FEET.

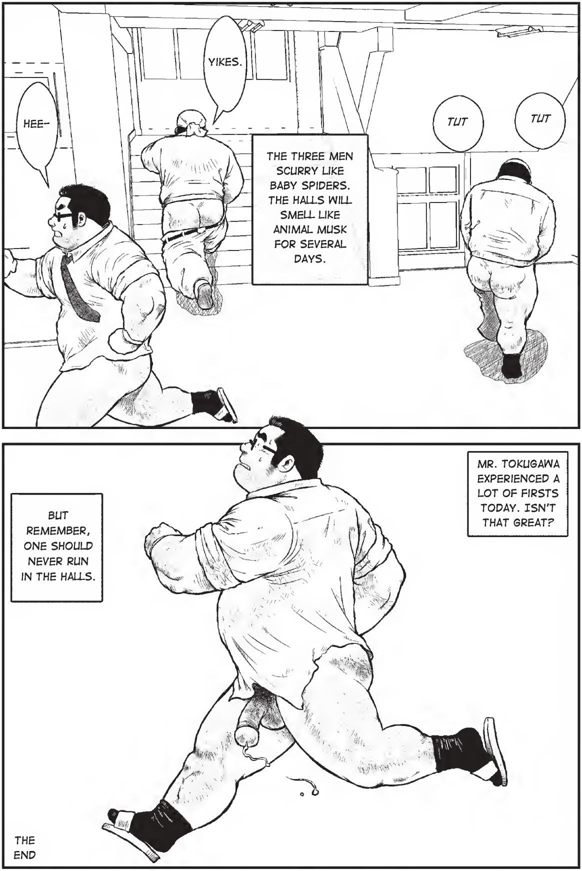

HE FALLSL BACK ON HIS HAUNCHES, BRINGING BACK WITH HIM AKECHI'S FATHER, WHO HAS BEEN HOLDING ALL THAT WEIGHT ON HIS BACK AS WELL.
IT LOOKS LIKE AKECHI'S FATHER LET OUT A LITTLE PEE UPON IMPACT.
GUH
GOH

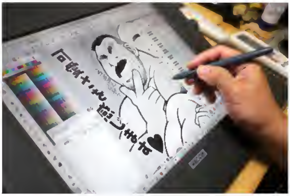

WATCHING THE SCENE MAKES MR. ODA'S BUTT SQUIRM,
YOU WANT ME, POPS?
YES, PLEASE. PUT IT IN ME.
AND HE PUTS HIMSELF AT THE FRONT OF THE LINE. THEY ARE ONE REGULAR THREESOME TRAIN TOGETHER.
HAA
HAA


FROM THE MIDDLE, AKECHI'S FATHER THRUSTS HIS HIPS BACK AND FORTH, STIMULATING BOTH OF THEM SIMULTANEOUSLY.
HFF
HMFF
I CAN'T HANDLE IT.
JUST LIKE A CHOO-CHOO TRAIN.
ATTA BOY!
THAT'S IT!


SQUEEZED FROM BEHIND AND FROM ON TOP, AKECHI'S FATHER CAN NO LONGER HOLD BACK, AND STARTS FLOODING ODA'S ASS WITH SEMEN.
I CAN'T! I CAN'T ANYMORE!
I'M COMING!
WITH WARM LIQUID FILLING HIS BUTT AND HIS PENIS SANDWICHED BY HIS THIGHS, EVEN ODA STARTS POURING SEMEN FROM HIS PENIS.
I'M LEAKING.
IT'S COMING


WHEN AKECHI'S FATHER COMES, HIS SPHINCTER CONTRACTS, AND MR. TOKUGAWA CAN NO LONGER KEEP IT IN, EITHER. HOWEVER, THE WAY HE COMES THIS TIME IS MUCH MORE SPECTACULAR THAN ANY TIME WITH HIS WIFE, KANAKO.
KANAKO, I'M SORRY! I'M COMING!
SO WHILE APOLOGIZING TO HIS WIFE, MR. TOKUGAWA COMES DEEP INSIDE THE RECTUM OF AKECHI'S FATHER.
THEY HEAR BELLS RINGING. SCHOOL IS OUT.
OH NO!
DING DONG DING DONG
HAA
HAA


TUT
TUT
THE THREE MEN SCURRY LIKE BABY SPIDERS. THE HALLS WILL SMELL LIKE ANIMAL MUSK FOR SEVERAL DAYS.
YIKES.
HEE-
MR. TOKUGAWA EXPERIENCED A LOT OF FIRSTS TODAY. ISN'T THAT GREAT?
BUT REMEMBER, ONE SHOULD NEVER RUN IN THE HALLS.
THE END



Kazuhide Ichikawa
市川和秀

"It can save lives!" Kazuhide Ichikawa exclaims, when we ask him why pornography matters in gay manga. In a manner of speaking, he is uniquely qualified to talk about this, though not because he deals exclusively in erotica. Anyone who's seen his work or follows his prolific blog output knows he is a multifaceted artist and storyteller with wide narrative range. He's just as capable of writing parables of schoolyard bullying as he is of depicting soft-core *kemono* (furry) sex. Ichikawa's point about the importance of gay porn in Japan has to do with how gay communities worldwide thrive in their respective environments, and Japan's gay world has an uncanny relationship with manga and media, as Ichikawa proves in the interview we conduct at his home.

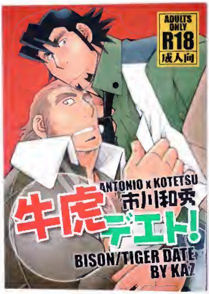
There is no culture of comics as robust as that of Japan's, sociologically or aesthetically. Its queer community, though, is in a more precarious state. Being "out" is not a right but a luxury; some even view it as frivolous. Ichikawa himself, for example, while openly gay in very manifest ways—sharing a house with his life partner and working out of a studio run by gay fitness trainers—is unflinchingly private in equally important ways. Published only under this pseudonym, he is out to his parents but not to his older brother. He's also one of the very few artists who has invited us into his home. Most found it a bit audacious to be asked for access to their most intimate environs.

In the dining area of their home, which we set up as the backstage of our video interview, Ichikawa's partner eats a slice of cake while the artist sternly debates with himself whether he is going to show his face in our video or not. We decide for the time being that any later decision for or against full exposure can be handled in edit, and we share a perverse thought that perhaps the video, whose intended audience is English speakers, won't be so visible in Japan.

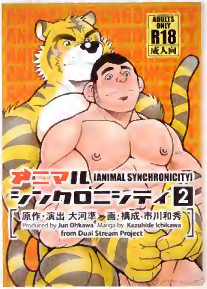
Ichikawa has spent many years living abroad in anglophone cultures where gay identity is overtly political. So when the twenty-plus-year veteran of gay comics says pornographic manga can save lives in Japan, he means that it substantiates gay existence by allowing it to live in narrative form. As a popular medium, manga has the power to validate the real feelings of sexual minorities who can't afford to live outside of the closet. Gay manga and pornographic content, according to Ichikawa, can provide a cucial manifestation of gay desire, even for people who choose without judgement or fear to keep their sexual orientiations anonymous.

Ichikawa got his own start in gay manga as a function of necessity: he knew what he wanted to read, and it just didn't exist. There was no gay manga that spoke to him, so he figured he might as well create it himself.

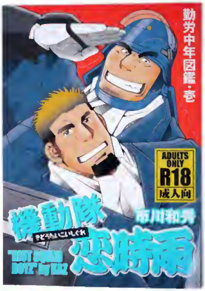
"I love drawing manga because it connects me to people around the world. It's a skill I know I have, and I want to use



Bison/Tiger Date (2011)


ADULTS ONLY
R18
成人向
アニマル (ANIMAL SYNCHRONICITY)
シンクロニシティ 2
原作・演出 大河準 画・構成 市川和秀
Produced by Jun Ohkawa Manga by Kazuhide Ichikawa
from Dual Stream Project

Animal Synchronicity #2 (2013)


勤労中年図鑑・壱
ADULTS ONLY
R18
成人向
市川和秀
機動隊恋時雨
きどうたいこいしぐれ
RIOT SQUAD BOYZ by KAZ

Riot Squad Boyz (2011)

this skill for gay people, because lots of my gay friends have helped me. I want to do something in return. By staying connected, I think gay people feel less isolated. They feel acceptance."

Ichikawa reiterates several times the importance of giving gay people a means of solidarity. This is no doubt in part because while coming to terms with his sexuality as an adolescent, he felt "incredibly left out... excluded. There weren't any gay characters in most of the manga I read."

He adds, "I loved Boys' Love comics. Still love them. There are many writers I liked and still like." But while BL comics had in fact dominated the underground market by the time he was working as a designer himself, he continued to feel excluded because "all of the characters in BL manga are *bishonen*, and I am not *bishonen*. Never can be."

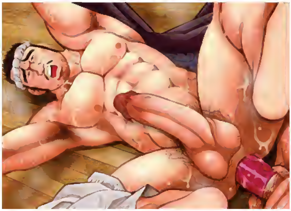
Things have changed over the course of the last ten years, according to him, with more crossover taking place between BL and other gay content creators. Whereas at past comics events (e.g., Comiket), gay men and straight women stood in clear trenches, there appears to have grown a wider and deeper DMZ, as women take on the hard-core style featuring bigger characters, and gay men explore the kinds of stories that appeal to fans of *yaoi* romance.

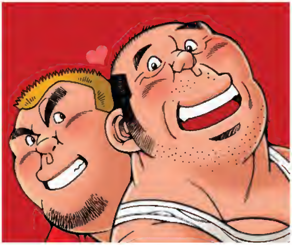
Some readers may be incredulous that a visual paradigm such as manga, which prides itself on surreal deformations of the human body, could be looked upon for allegory; that anyone would look for accurate representations of themselves in these characterizations. Call it a part of the universal unconscious, then, but Ichikawa's characters, so firmly enmeshed in the visual diction of traditional manga, are also completely emblematic of a kind of gay fantasy.

Ichikawa's art has an aquiline, almost brutalist quality, to borrow from architectural jargon that befits the building-sized honchos he depicts. In stories like "Yakuza Godfathers" (excerpted herein), "The Adventures of Kamejiro," and "Daddies Garden," heroes are father figures running blue-collar businesses and chief executive gangsters. They share an air and a look of authority, and of course, uniforms.

Lately, he's been working on developing more narratives featuring middle-aged and older men. Again, a function of necessity: as he and his peers get older, he wants his content to create empowering visualizations. However, what really sells these days, Ichikawa says, are *kemono* manga. It has taken him a bit by surprise, but he's excited to see what younger generations of readers and artists are into.

Ichikawa hears from fans all over the world who have told the artist how important his work has been to their identity formation. One high school student in New York let Ichikawa know his work was the subject of a book report, and that his teacher gave him an A. Another high school student, addressing Ichikawa by the high American honorific "Dude," emailed him without compunction to say that he was reading his manga during a boring class.





Ichikawa lives for this feedback. The greatest fulfillment in his career is the connectivity of shared creative desires. When asked about prospective goals for his manga, he says, "The future of my work is to make manga for people outside of Japan. Making it in English is the beginning."

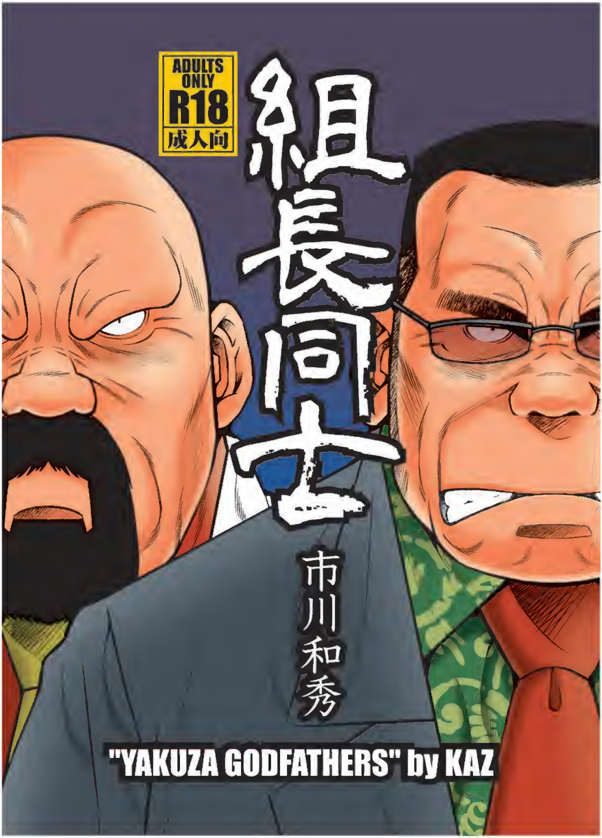
It should be noted that this entire interview was conducted in English. However, he admits that if his Japanese language comics are being disseminated as far and wide as South America and Europe, it is predictably through the services of pirates and scanlators, which may or may not be a problem.

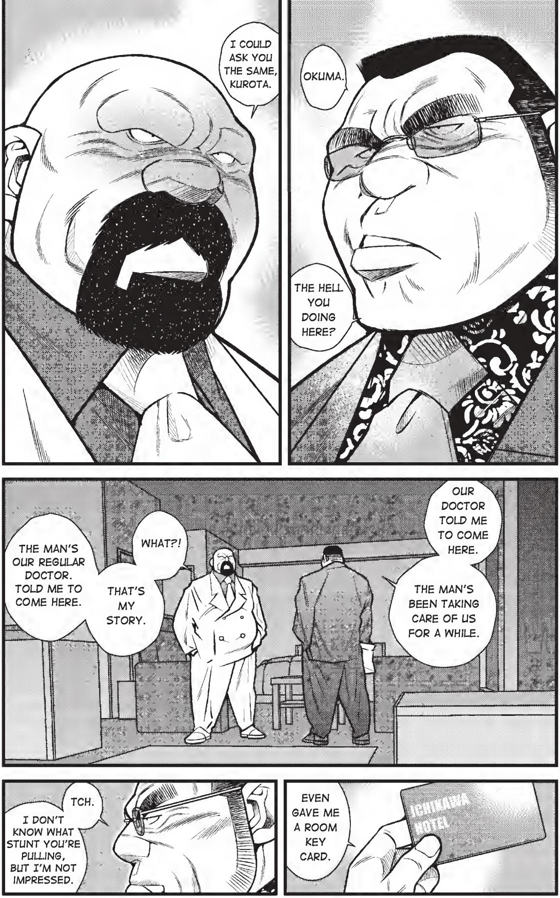
He is noticeably uncomfortable admitting to the importance of unsanctioned translations—and with reason. The debilitating effect of scanlations on an artist's income is variously described as "depressing" and "criminal." Admittedly, a few of our artists prefer to interpret "unsanctioned" as simply "unsolicited" and to think of scanlations as a research tool. How would one translate this or that? It's the thinking of a multilingual artist whose livelihood may not depend entirely on his comics income.

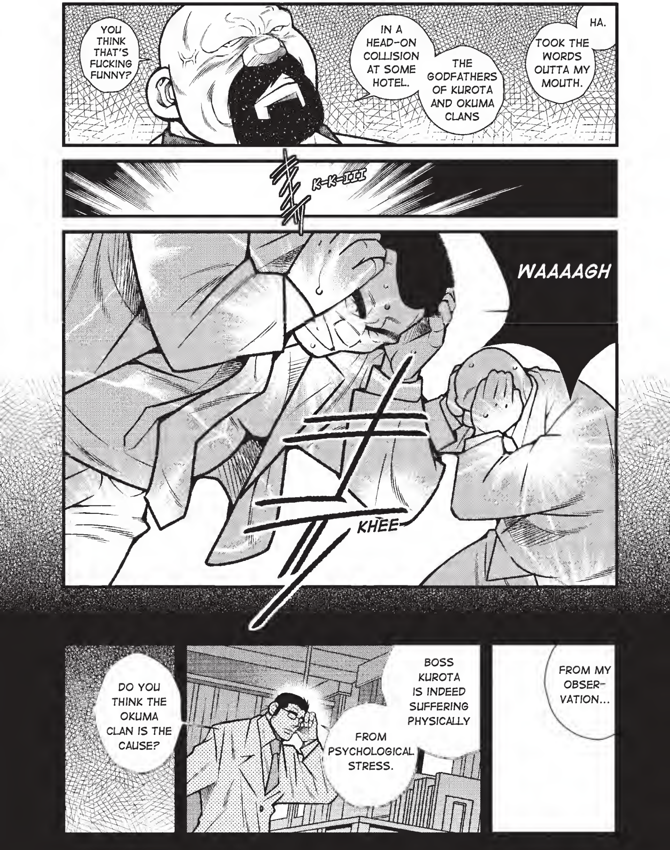
Ichikawa says he simply wants to create "gay entertainment manga. One of my motivations for making gay manga in the first place was, as I'd mentioned, that there weren't gay main characters in film or television. Take *Star Wars*, for example... Luke Skywalker isn't gay, but I'd love to see him fall in love with a man." Who wouldn't?

Like the other artists in this book, Ichikawa sees "*bara*" as a contentious term. "It is always confusing to me when English speakers use the word '*bara*,' not so much because it's offensive, but because it's so outdated. It's a really old expression, like 'pansy.' It's the same feeling when you hear that in English."

As for why the word gained coinage, "I think the term '*bara*' must be used because of '*yuri*,'" Ichikawa says, referring to lesbian manga, which translates to "lily"—a term rooted in the old *Barazoku* magazine. There doesn't seem to be a satisfactorily Japanese-sounding word to describe the fact that much of gay manga by men for men is imbued by some overarching similarities. Ichikawa simply states, "Japanese gay culture cannot be analyzed only from a manga point of view. You need to analyze it from how Japanese gay society and community is shifting. How Japanese culture in general is shifting."


ADULTS ONLY
R18
成人向
組長同士
市川和秀
"YAKUZA GODFATHERS" by KAZ

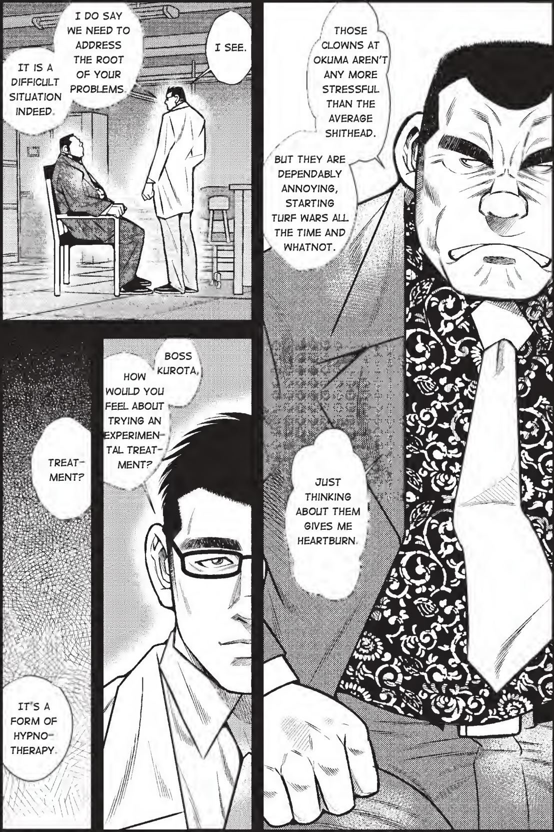

OKUMA.
THE HELL YOU DOING HERE?
I COULD ASK YOU THE SAME, KUROTA.
OUR DOCTOR TOLD ME TO COME HERE.
THE MAN'S BEEN TAKING CARE OF US FOR A WHILE.
WHAT?!
THE MAN'S OUR REGULAR DOCTOR. TOLD ME TO COME HERE.
THAT'S MY STORY.
EVEN GAVE ME A ROOM KEY CARD.
ICHIKAWA HOTEL
TCH.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT STUNT YOU'RE PULLING, BUT I'M NOT IMPRESSED.

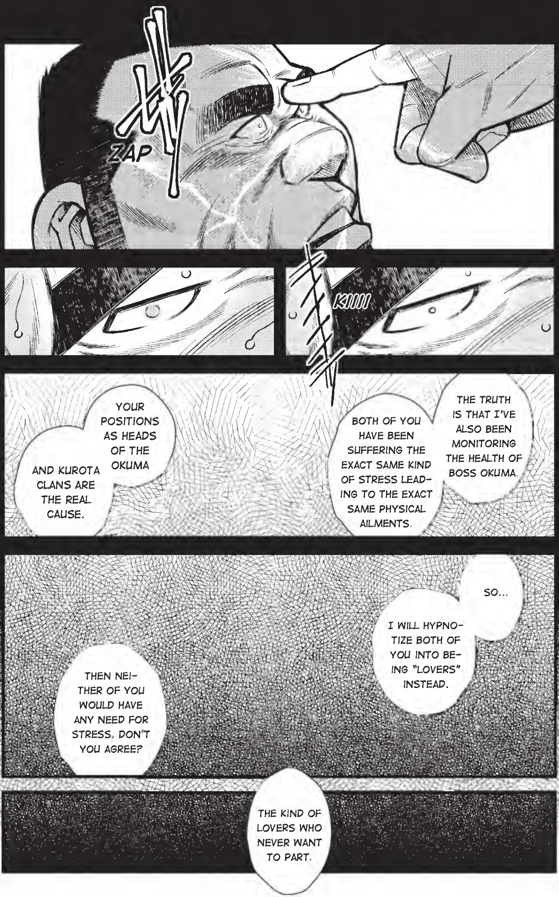

HA.
TOOK THE WORDS OUTTA MY MOUTH.
THE GODFATHERS OF KUROTA AND OKUMA CLANS
IN A HEAD-ON COLLISION AT SOME HOTEL.
YOU THINK THAT'S FUCKING FUNNY?
K-K-III
WAAAAGH
KHEE
FROM MY OBSERVATION...
BOSS KUROTA IS INDEED SUFFERING PHYSICALLY
FROM PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS.
DO YOU THINK THE OKUMA CLAN IS THE CAUSE?

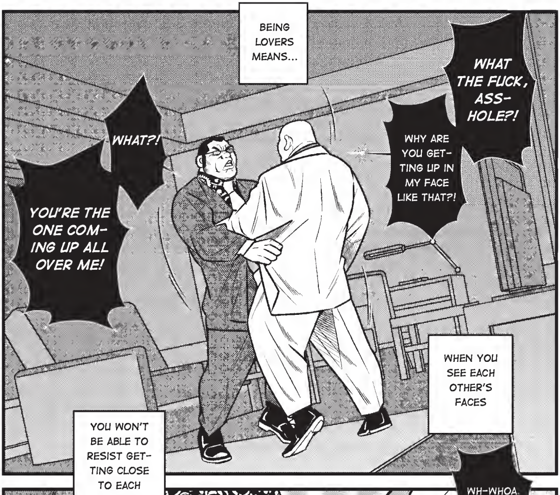
組長同士

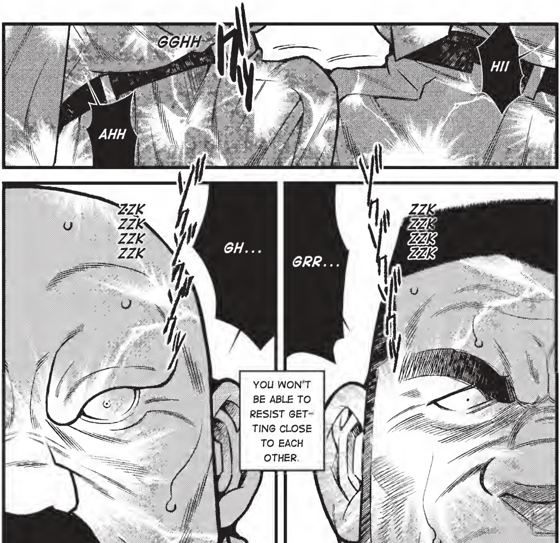
YAKUZA GODFATHERS

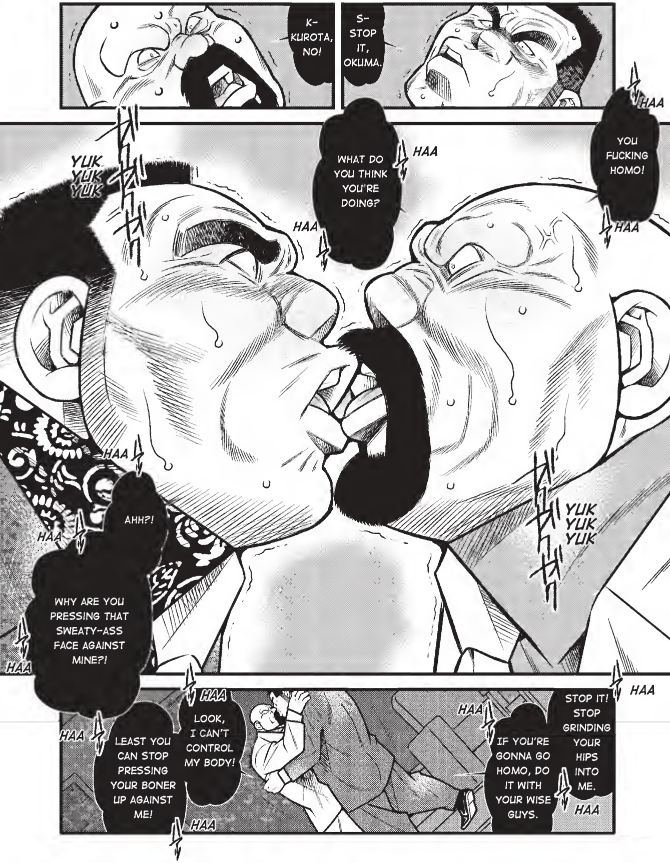
市川
KAZUHIDE
ICHIKAWA
秀

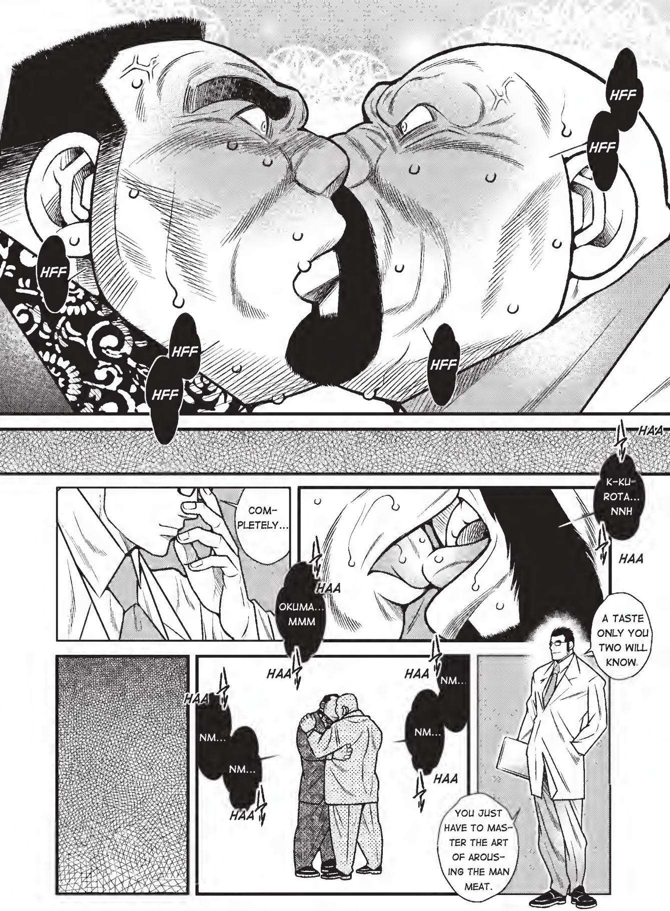

THOSE CLOWNS AT OKUMA AREN'T ANY MORE STRESSFUL THAN THE AVERAGE SHITHEAD.
BUT THEY ARE DEPENDABLY ANNOYING, STARTING TURF WARS ALL THE TIME AND WHATNOT.
JUST THINKING ABOUT THEM GIVES ME HEARTBURN.
I SEE.
I DO SAY WE NEED TO ADDRESS THE ROOT OF YOUR PROBLEMS.
IT IS A DIFFICULT SITUATION INDEED.
BOSS KUROTA,
HOW WOULD YOU FEEL ABOUT TRYING AN EXPERIMENTAL TREATMENT?
TREATMENT?
IT'S A FORM OF HYPNOTHERAPY.

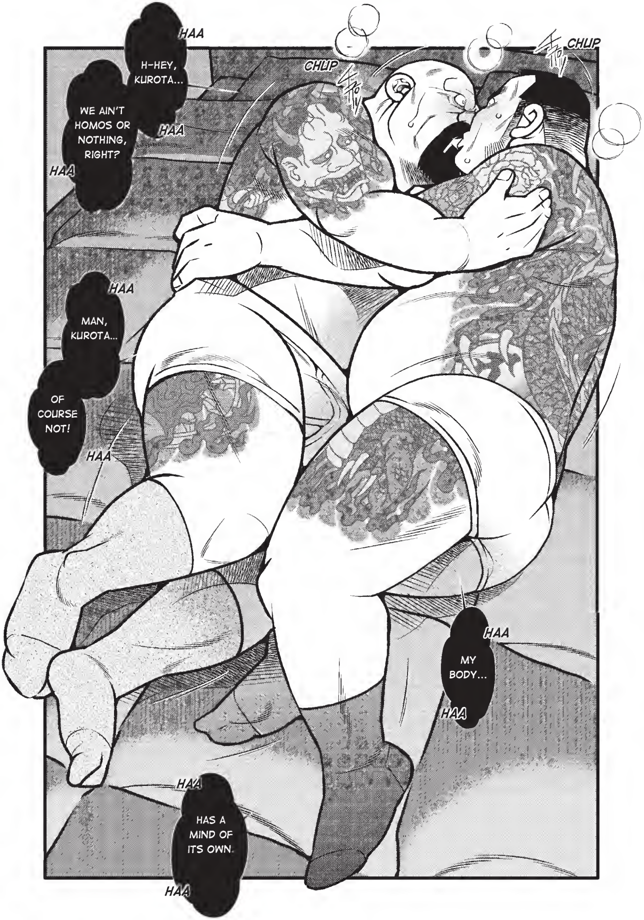

ZAP
KIIII
THE TRUTH IS THAT I'VE ALSO BEEN MONITORING THE HEALTH OF BOSS OKUMA.
BOTH OF YOU HAVE BEEN SUFFERING THE EXACT SAME KIND OF STRESS LEADING TO THE EXACT SAME PHYSICAL AILMENTS.
YOUR POSITIONS AS HEADS OF THE OKUMA
AND KUROTA CLANS ARE THE REAL CAUSE.
SO...
I WILL HYPNOTIZE BOTH OF YOU INTO BEING "LOVERS" INSTEAD.
THEN NEITHER OF YOU WOULD HAVE ANY NEED FOR STRESS, DON'T YOU AGREE?
THE KIND OF LOVERS WHO NEVER WANT TO PART.

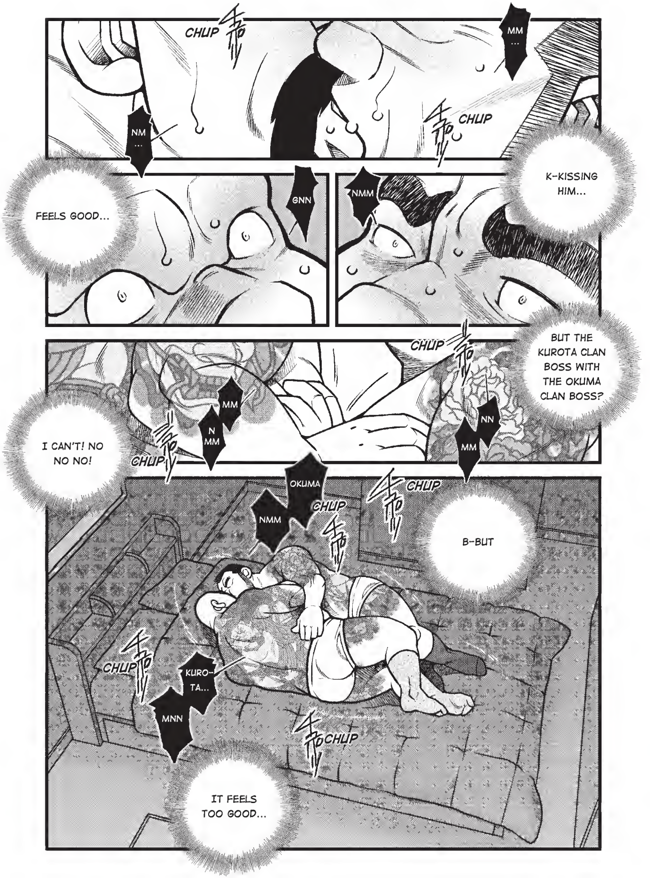

BEING LOVERS MEANS...
WHAT THE FUCK, ASSHOLE?!
WHY ARE YOU GETTING UP IN MY FACE LIKE THAT?!
WHAT?!
YOU'RE THE ONE COMING UP ALL OVER ME!
WHEN YOU SEE EACH OTHER'S FACES
YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO RESIST GETTING CLOSE TO EACH OTHER.
WH-WHOA. WHY DO YOU HAVE A BONER?
LOOK WHO'S TALKING!
K-KUROTA... ARE YOU SOME KIND OF HOMO?
Y-YOU SOME KIND OF FAGGOT?!

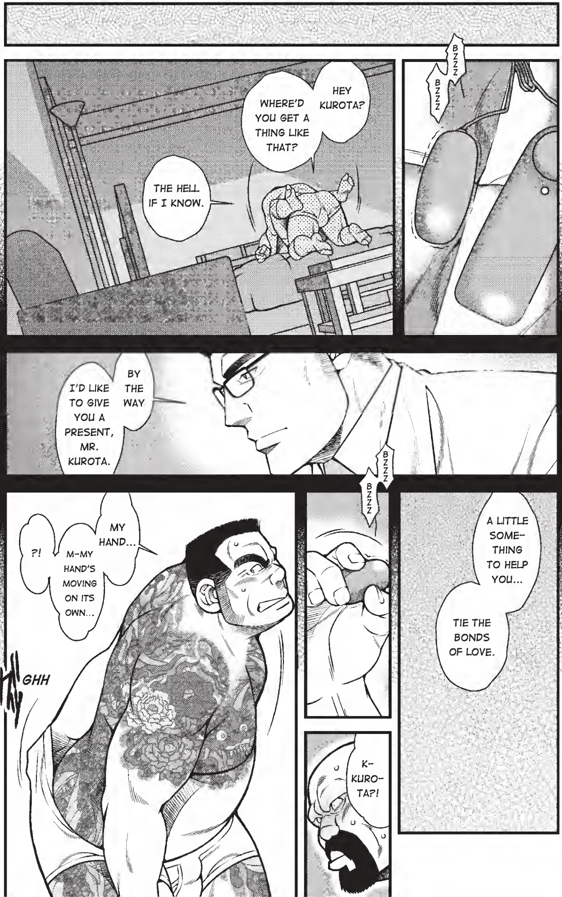

HII
GGHH
AHH
ZZK
ZZK
ZZK
ZZK
GRR...
GH...
ZZK
ZZK
ZZK
ZZK
YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO RESIST GETTING CLOSE TO EACH OTHER.
THE ECSTASY YOU WILL EXPERIENCE TOGETHER...
WH-WHAT?!
WILL BE THOUSANDS OF TIMES RICHER THAN ANYTHING YOU'VE FELT.

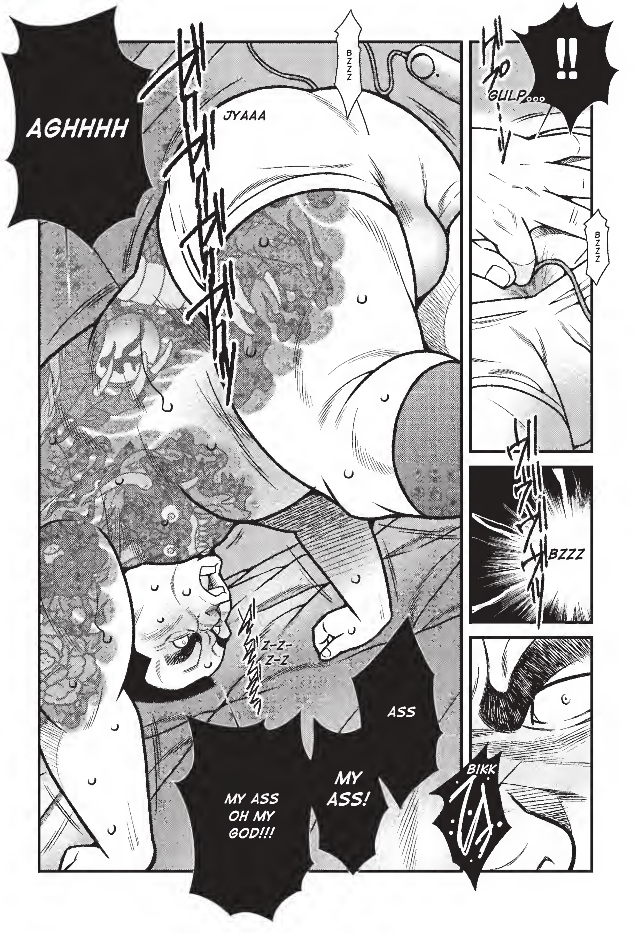

S- STOP IT, OKUMA.
K- KUROTA, NO!
HAA
YOU FUCKING HOMO!
HAA
HAA
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?
HAA
YUK YUK YUK
YUK YUK YUK
HAA
AHH?!
HAA
WHY ARE YOU PRESSING THAT SWEATY-ASS FACE AGAINST MINE?!
HAA
HAA
STOP IT! STOP GRINDING YOUR HIPS INTO ME.
HAA
HAA
IF YOU'RE GONNA GO HOMO, DO IT WITH YOUR WISE GUYS.
HAA
LOOK, I CAN'T CONTROL MY BODY!
HAA
HAA
LEAST YOU CAN STOP PRESSING YOUR BONER UP AGAINST ME!
HAA

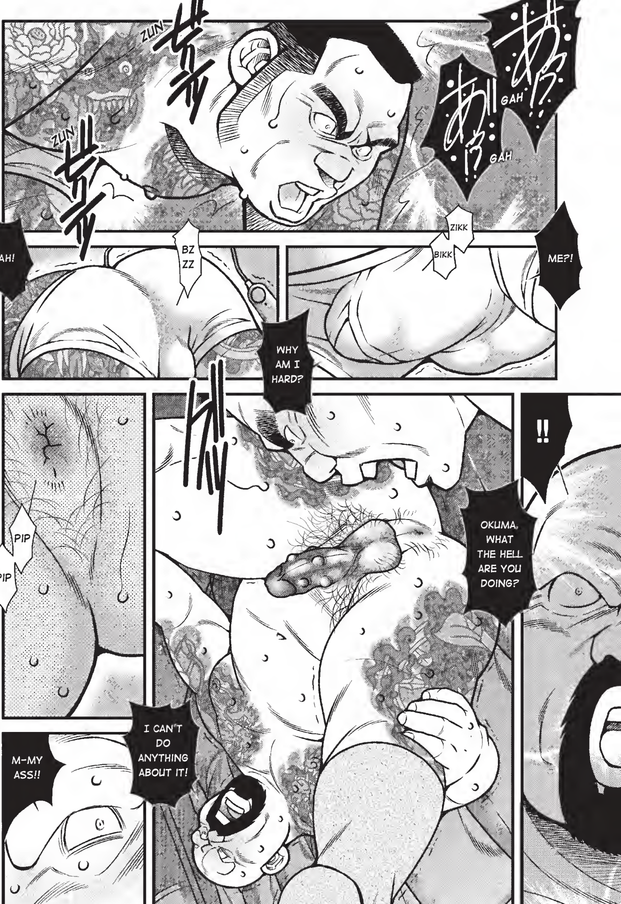

HFF
HFF
HFF
HFF
HFF
HFF
HAA
K-KU-ROTA... NNH
HAA
HAA
OKUMA... MMM
COMPLETELY...
A TASTE ONLY YOU TWO WILL KNOW.
YOU JUST HAVE TO MASTER THE ART OF AROUSING THE MAN MEAT.
HAA
NM...
NM...
HAA
HAA
HAA
NM...
NM...
HAA

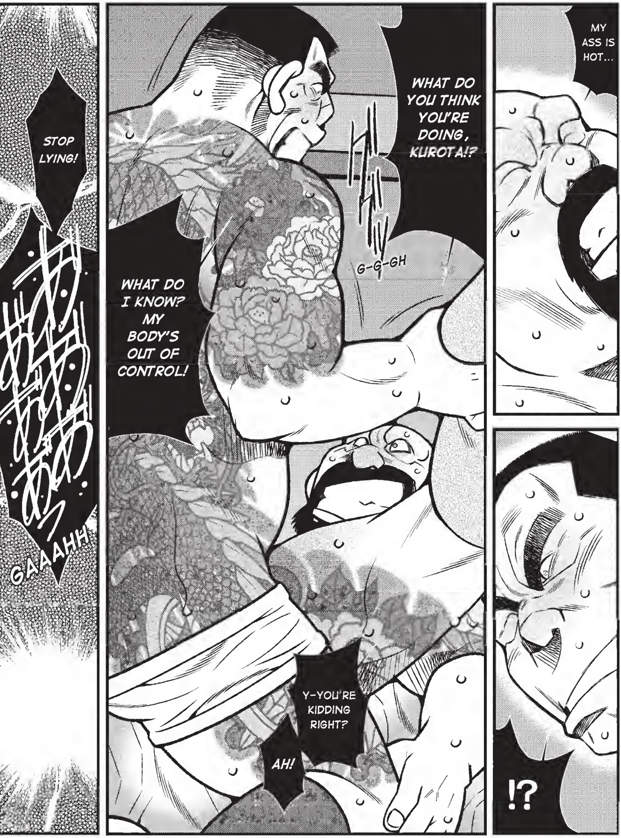

CHUP
CHUP
HAA
H-HEY, KUROTA...
HAA
WE AIN'T HOMOS OR NOTHING, RIGHT?
HAA
HAA
MAN, KUROTA...
OF COURSE NOT!
HAA
HAA
MY BODY...
HAA
HAA
HAS A MIND OF ITS OWN.
HAA

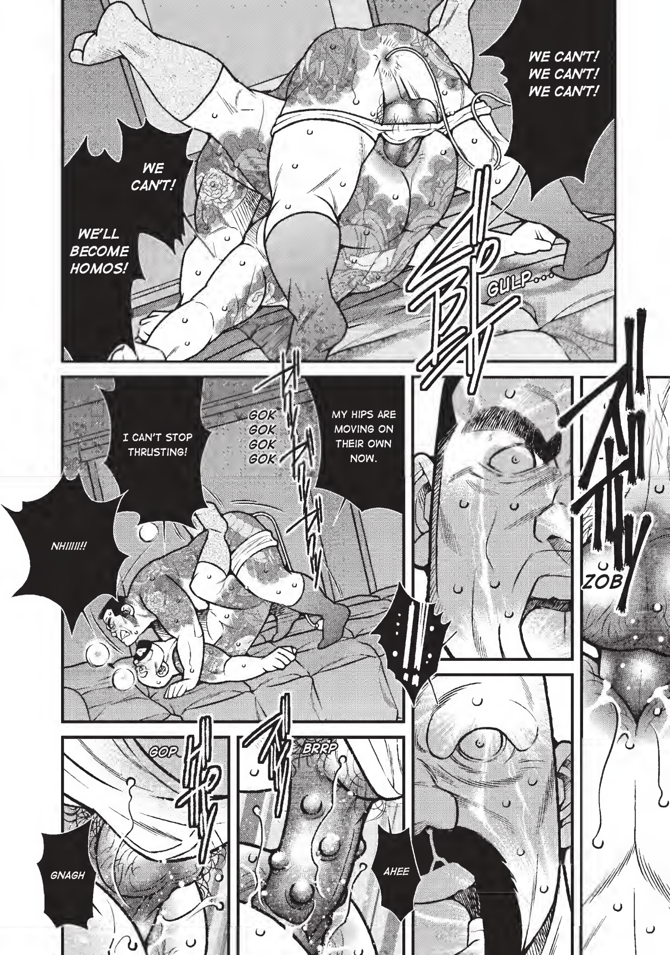

MM…
CHUP
CHUP
NM…
K-KISSING HIM...
NMM
GNN
FEELS GOOD...
BUT THE KUROTA CLAN BOSS WITH THE OKUMA CLAN BOSS?
CHUP
NN MM
MM
N MM
CHUP
I CAN'T! NO NO NO!
B-BUT
CHUP
OKUMA
NMM
CHUP
CHUP
KURO-TA...
MNN
CHUP
IT FEELS TOO GOOD...

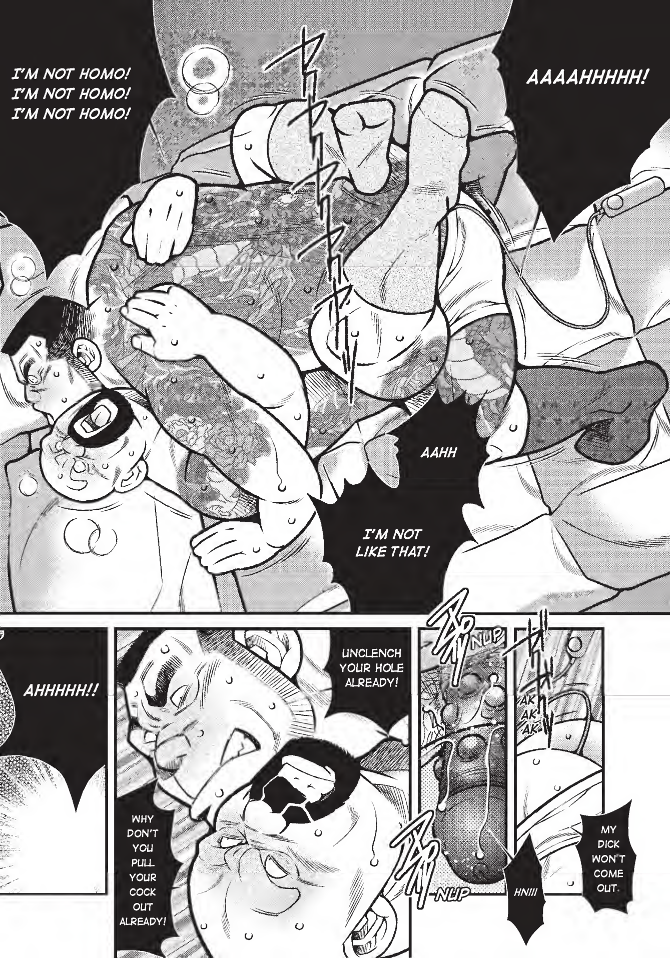

BZZZ
BZZZ
HEY KUROTA?
WHERE'D YOU GET A THING LIKE THAT?
THE HELL IF I KNOW.
BY THE WAY
I'D LIKE TO GIVE YOU A PRESENT, MR. KUROTA.
BZZZ
BZZZ
A LITTLE SOMETHING TO HELP YOU...
TIE THE BONDS OF LOVE.
K-KUROTA?!
MY HAND...
M-MY HAND'S MOVING ON ITS OWN...
?!
GHH

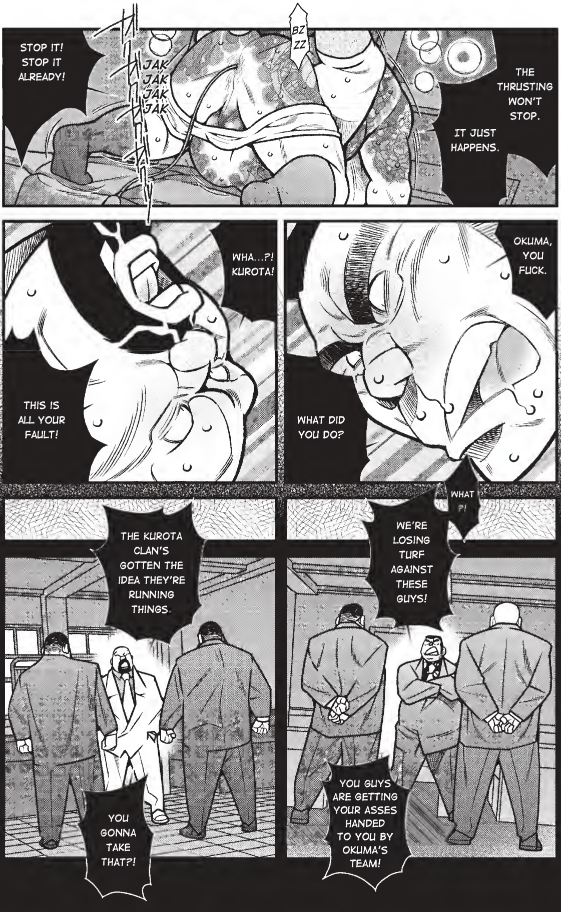

!!
GULP...
BZZZ
BZZZ
BIKK
AGHHHH
BZZZ
JYAAA
Z-Z-Z-Z
ASS
MY ASS!
MY ASS OH MY GOD!!!

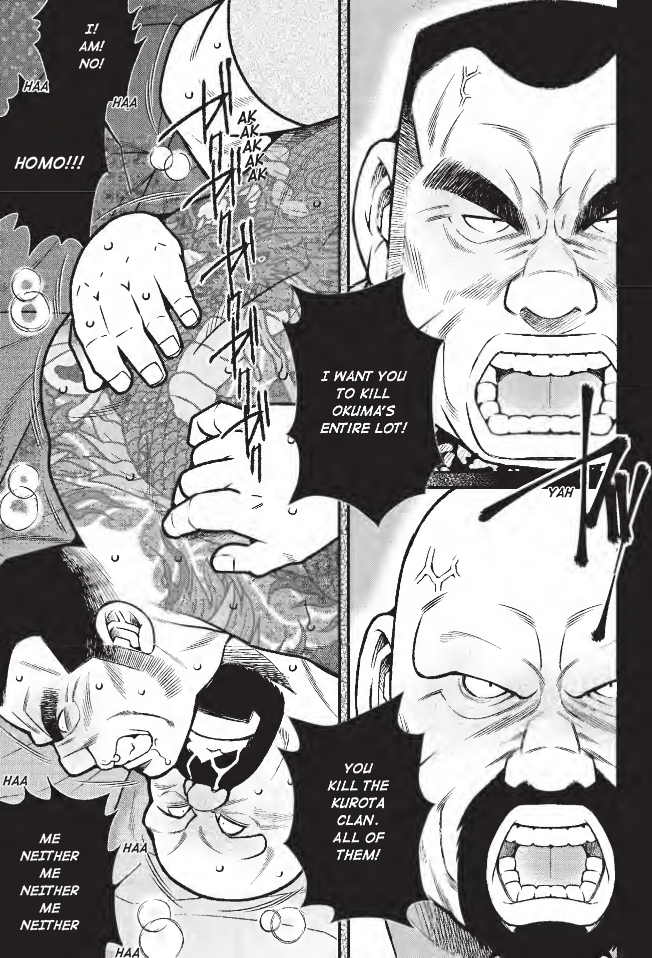

あ!?
GAH
あ!!
GAH
ZUN
ZUN
ME?!
ZIKK
BIKK
BZ ZZ
AH!
WHY AM I HARD?
!!
OKUMA, WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?
I CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT!
PIP
PIP
M-MY ASS!!

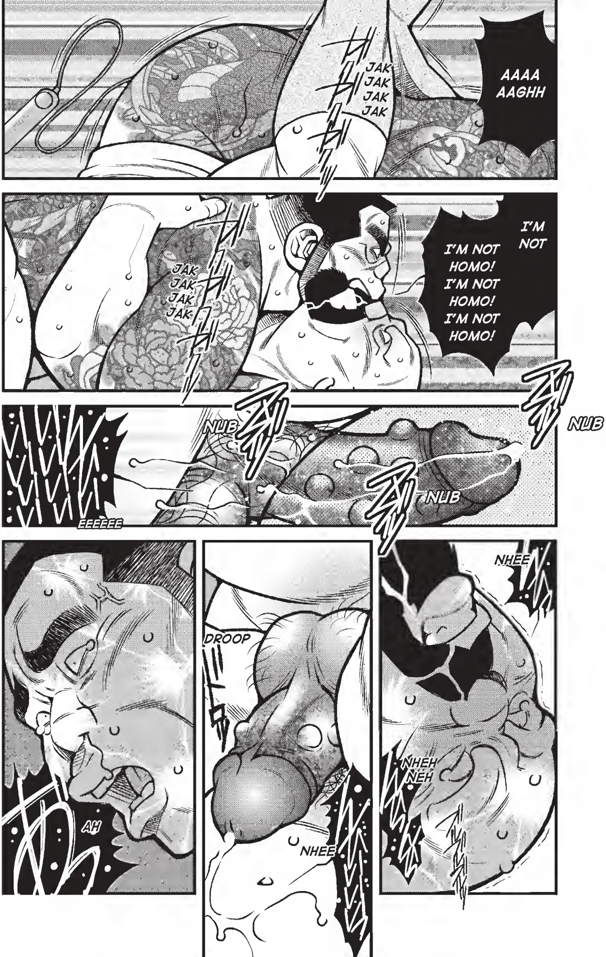

MY ASS IS HOT...
!?
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING, KUROTA!?
G-G-GH
WHAT DO I KNOW? MY BODY'S OUT OF CONTROL!
Y-YOU'RE KIDDING RIGHT?
AH!
STOP LYING!
GAAAHH

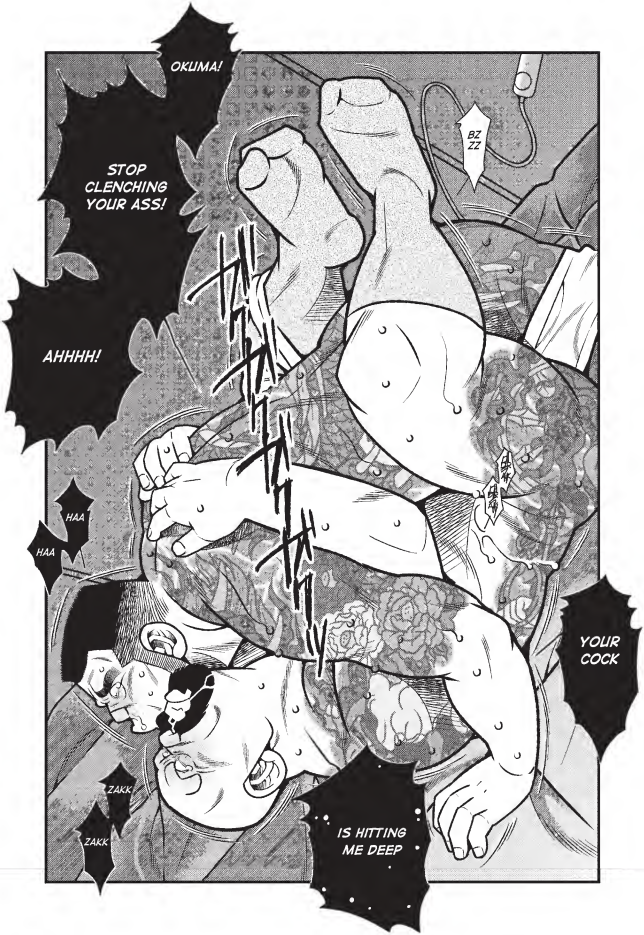

WE CAN'T! WE CAN'T! WE CAN'T!
WE CAN'T!
WE'LL BECOME HOMOS!
GULP...
ZOB
!!!
MY HIPS ARE MOVING ON THEIR OWN NOW.
GOK GOK GOK GOK
I CAN'T STOP THRUSTING!
NHIIIIII!!
AHEE
BRRP
GOP
GNAGH

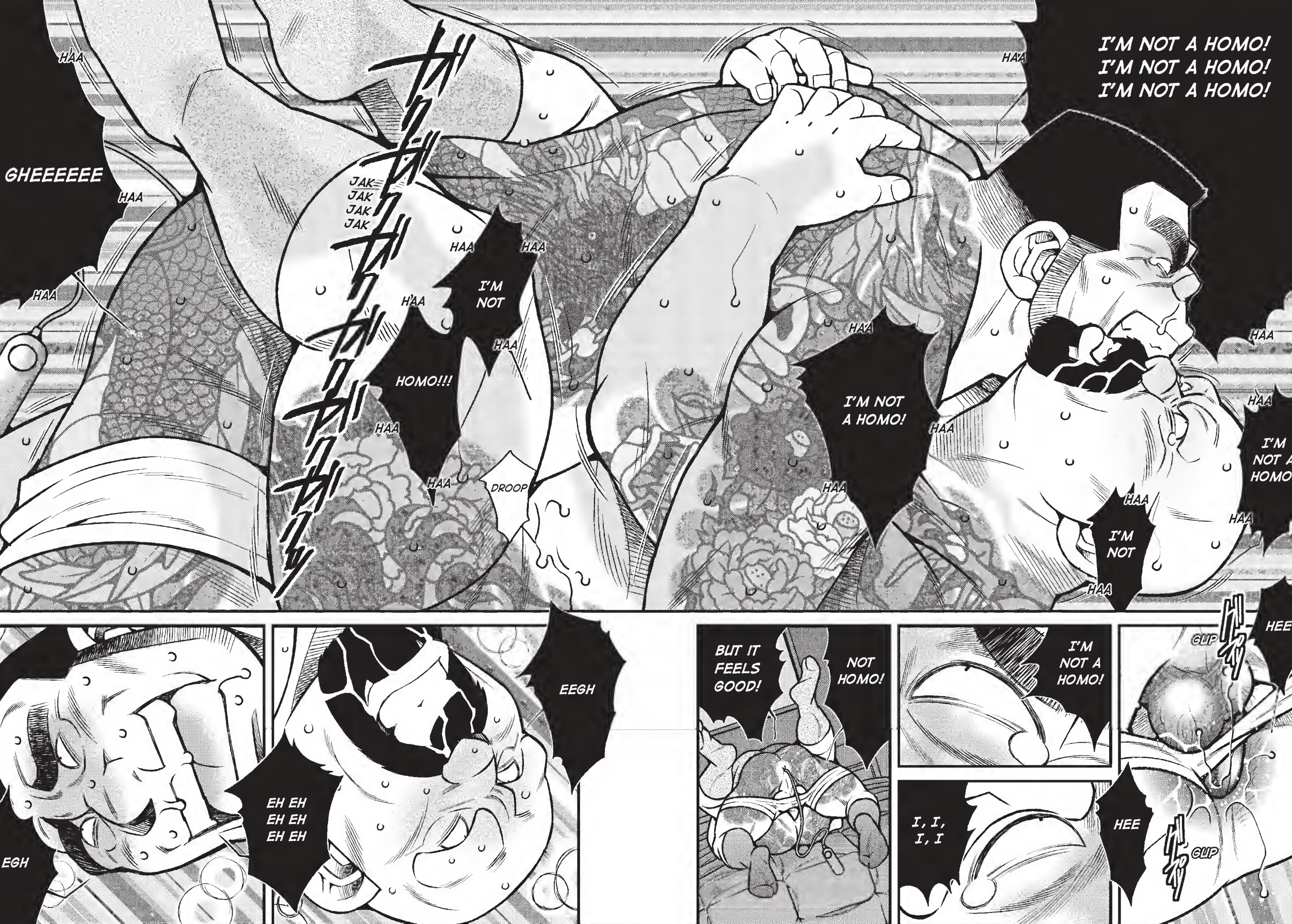

AAAAHHHHH!
I'M NOT HOMO!
I'M NOT HOMO!
I'M NOT HOMO!
AAHH
I'M NOT LIKE THAT!
MY DICK WON'T COME OUT.
HNIII
AK AK AK
NUP
NUP
UNCLENCH YOUR HOLE ALREADY!
WHY DON'T YOU PULL YOUR COCK OUT ALREADY!
AHHHHH!!

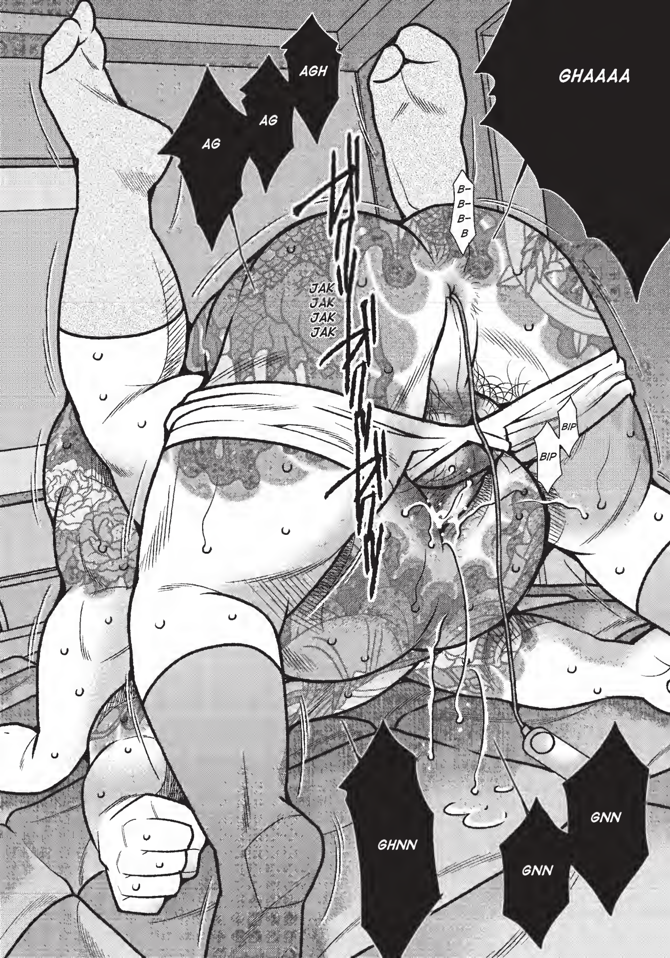

THE THRUSTING WON'T STOP.
IT JUST HAPPENS.
BZZZ
JAK JAK JAK JAK
STOP IT! STOP IT ALREADY!
OKUMA, YOU FUCK.
WHAT DID YOU DO?
WHA...?! KUROTA!
THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT!
WHAT ?!
WE'RE LOSING TURF AGAINST THESE GUYS!
YOU GUYS ARE GETTING YOUR ASSES HANDED TO YOU BY OKUMA'S TEAM!
THE KUROTA CLAN'S GOTTEN THE IDEA THEY'RE RUNNING THINGS.
YOU GONNA TAKE THAT?!

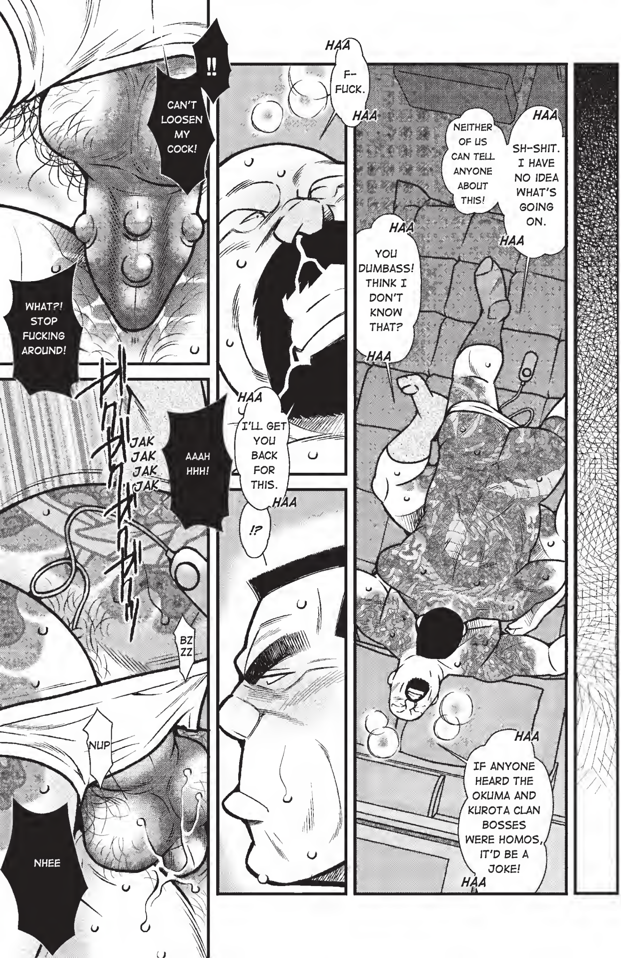

I WANT YOU TO KILL OKUMA'S ENTIRE LOT!
YAH
YOU KILL THE KUROTA CLAN. ALL OF THEM!
I! AM! NO!
HOMO!!!
HAA
HAA
AK AK AK AK AK
HAA
HAA
ME NEITHER ME NEITHER ME NEITHER
HAA

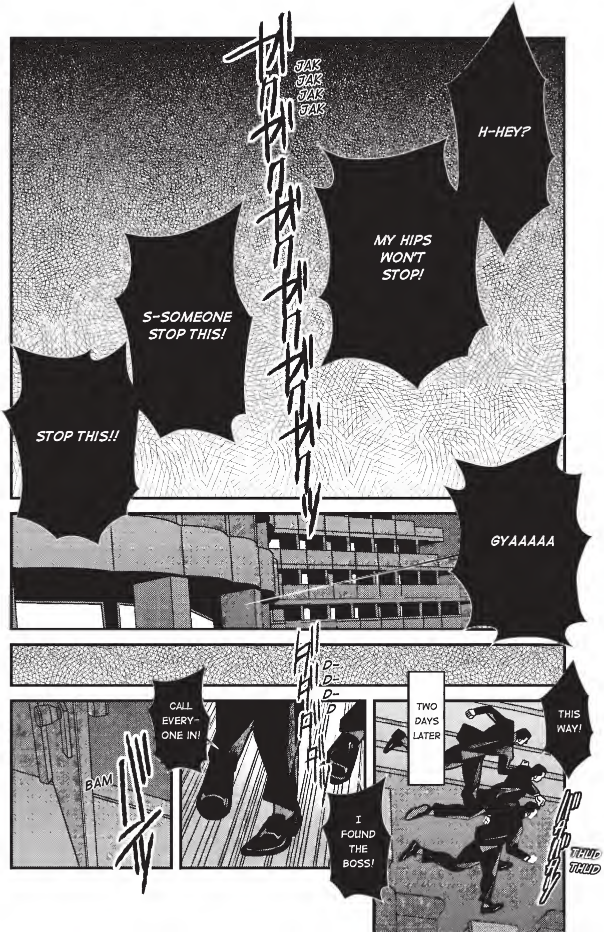

AAAA AAGHH
JAK JAK JAK JAK
I'M NOT
I'M NOT HOMO! I'M NOT HOMO! I'M NOT HOMO!
JAK JAK JAK JAK
NUB
NUB
NUB
EEEEEE
NHEE
NHEH NEH
DROOP
NHEE
AH

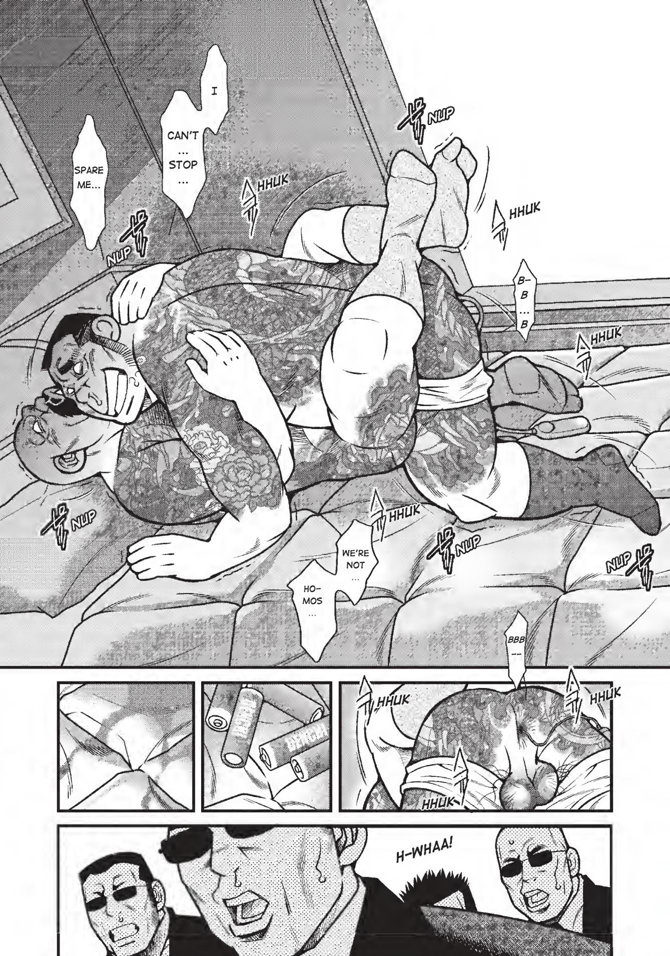

OKUMA!
STOP CLENCHING YOUR ASS!
AHHHH!
BZ ZZ
HAA
HAA
YOUR COCK
IS HITTING ME DEEP
ZAKK
ZAKK

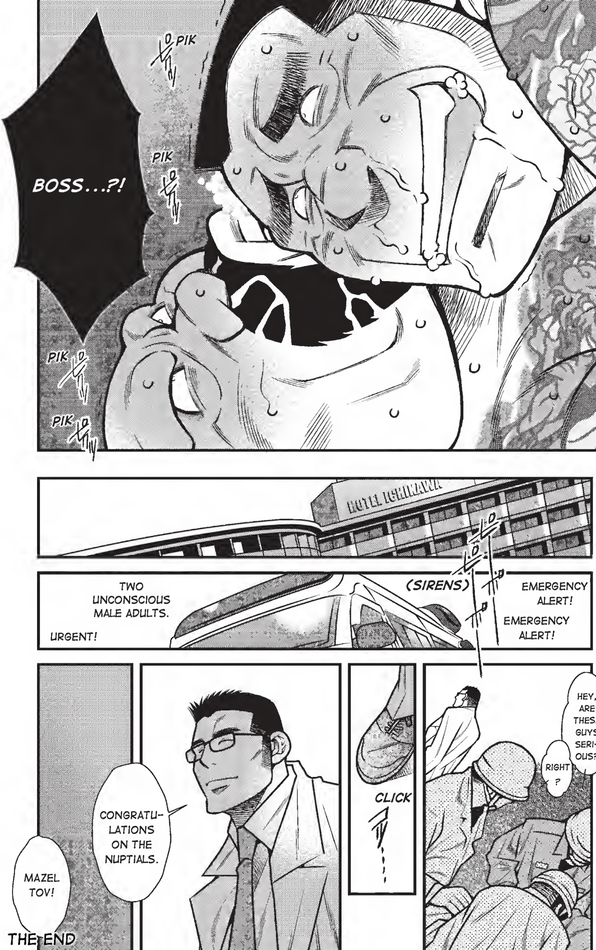

I'M NOT A HOMO! I'M NOT A HOMO! I'M NOT A HOMO!
HA'A
HAA
I'M NOT A HOMO
HAA
HAA
I'M NOT
HAA
HAA
I'M NOT A HOMO!
HAA
HAA
HAA
JAK JAK JAK JAK
HAA
HAA
I'M NOT
HAA
HAA
HOMO!!!
HAA
HAA
DROOP
GHEEEEEE
HAA
HAA
HAA
HEE
GUP
HEE
GUP
I'M NOT A HOMO!
I, I, I, I
NOT HOMO!
BUT IT FEELS GOOD!
EEGH
EH EH EH EH EH EH
EGH


GHAAAA
AGH
AG
AG
B- B- B- B
JAK JAK JAK JAK
BIP
BIP
GNN
GNN
GHNN


HAA
SH-SHIT. I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT'S GOING ON.
HAA
NEITHER OF US CAN TELL ANYONE ABOUT THIS!
HAA
YOU DUMBASS! THINK I DON'T KNOW THAT?
HAA
HAA
IF ANYONE HEARD THE OKUMA AND KUROTA CLAN BOSSES WERE HOMOS, IT'D BE A JOKE!
HAA
HAA
F-- FUCK.
HAA
HAA
I'LL GET YOU BACK FOR THIS.
HAA
!?
!!
CAN'T LOOSEN MY COCK!
WHAT?! STOP FUCKING AROUND!
JAK JAK JAK JAK
AAAH HHH!
BZ ZZ
NUP
NHEE


H-HEY?
MY HIPS WON'T STOP!
JAK JAK JAK JAK
S-SOMEONE STOP THIS!
STOP THIS!!
GYAAAAA
TWO DAYS LATER
THIS WAY!
THUD THUD
I FOUND THE BOSS!
D-D-D-D
CALL EVERY-ONE IN!
BAM


NUP
HHUK
I CAN'T ... STOP ...
SPARE ME...
HHUK
NUP
B-B ... B
HHUK
HHUK
NUP
NUP
WE'RE NOT ...
HO-MOS ...
NUP
BBB --
HHUK
HHUK
HHUK
H-WHAA!


PIK
PIK
BOSS...?!
PIK
PIK
HOTEL ICHIKAWA
EMERGENCY ALERT!
EMERGENCY ALERT!
(SIRENS)
TWO UNCONSCIOUS MALE ADULTS.
URGENT!
HEY, ARE THESE GUYS SERIOUS?
RIGHT?
CLICK
CONGRATULATIONS ON THE NUPTIALS.
MAZEL TOV!
THE END

LINEAGE

THE TIMELINE ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES HIGHLIGHTS A FEW NOTEWORTHY AND INFLUENTIAL MOMENTS IN JAPANESE HISTORY RELATED TO MALE-MALE SEXUALITY.

IT IS BY NO MEANS A COMPREHENSIVE TIMELINE, BUT WE HOPE IT PROVIDES USEFUL CONTEXT AND ENCOURAGES DEEPER EXPLORATION OF JAPAN'S QUEER PAST.

ADDITIONAL ENGLISH-LANGUAGE RESOURCES

CARTOGRAPHIES OF DESIRE: MALE-MALE SEXUALITY IN JAPANESE DISCOURSE, 1600–1950
BY GREGORY M. PFLUGFELDER

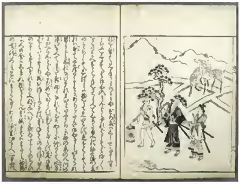
IN THE COMPANY OF MEN: REPRESENTATIONS OF MALE-MALE SEXUALITY IN MEIJI LITERATURE
BY JIM REICHERT

QUEER JAPAN FROM THE PACIFIC WAR TO THE INTERNET AGE
BY MARK MCLELLAND

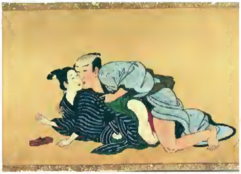
CONTACT MOMENTS: THE POLITICS OF INTERCULTURAL DESIRE IN JAPANESE MALE-QUEER CULTURES
BY KATSUHIKO SUGANUMA

GAY EROTIC ART IN JAPAN (VOLUME 1 AND VOLUME 2)
BY GENGOROH TAGAME

A BRIEF HISTORY OF MALE-MALE SEXUALITY IN JAPANESE CULTURE



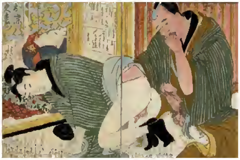
1687 Japan's booming seventeenth century print culture creates space for literatrue devoted to *shudo* ("the way of [male] youths"), a lifestyle with elaborate codes of conduct. Saikaku Ihara's short story collection *The Great Mirror of Male Love* is one of the genre's most important literary achievements. Its dozens of epic, oft-tragic tales of *nanshoku* (male-male love) feature a diverse array of characters: samurai (for whom male-male bonds were a part of the lifestyle), Buddhist clergy, merchants, lords, and peasants alike.



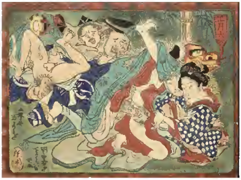
1717 *Hagakure*, a guidebook on *bushido*—the samurai code of conduct—advises samurai on the proper pursuit of *shudo* relationships.

1730 Nankai no Sanjin's short story collection, *Nanshoku Dew on a Mountain Path*, characterizes *nanshoku* as "the flower of the military class."

1750 *Spring Pastimes*, a *shunga* (erotic) handscroll by Issho Miyagawa, illustrates relations between samurai and *onnagata*—male actors in the kabuki theater who performed female roles onstage and offered their professional sexual services to men backstage.



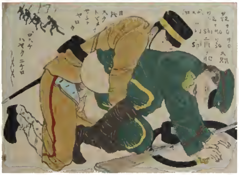
1802 Illustration by the widely influential ukiyo-e woodblock artist Utamaro Kitagawa (1753–1806), from his 1802 *shunga* series, *On the Road, Love Songs for the Thick-Necked Shamisen*. Many respected ukiyo-e artists of the era produce *shunga* prints, in which male-male sexuality was not unusual. Erotic artwork was part of everyday life and lacked the "sinful" stigma associated with pornography in Western cultures.



1868 The forcible opening of Japan to the West during the Meiji Restoration ushers in an era of "civilized morality" inspired by Western social policies. Public nudity and erotic imagery are prohibited. Male-male sexuality becomes marginalized and repositioned in discourse as an "immoral" behavior belonging to Japan's "barbarous" past.

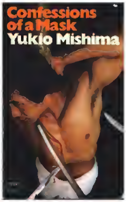
1871 *Festival Mask*, a *shunga* print by Kyosai, depicts a woman making love to a male performer in a large festival mask next to a male-male coupling.

1873 Amid a newly centralized and "modernized" Japanese legal system, anal intercourse is criminalized for nine years. In 1882, a new penal code influenced by the Napoleonic code effectively legalizes consensual anal sex.

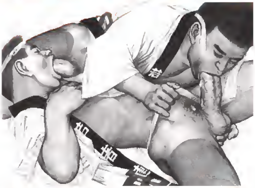


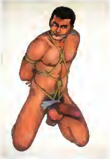
1887 Obscenity laws put a damper on discussions and depictions of male-male sexuality. Phallic art and erotic texts from the Edo period, including Saikaku's work, are banned or expurgated.

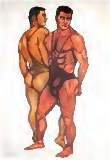
1904 In this rare example of Meiji-period homoerotic *shunga*, a propoganda image from the Russo-Japanese War depicts a Japanese fighter "finishing off" a dying Russian soldier.



風俗奇譚
4月特別号
マゾヒストの法悦境
朱金昭







1909

Moral panic arises over Japan's sexually "decadent" male students. They are dichotomized as *koha* (roughnecks) and *nanpa* (softies)—terms from Ogai Mori's 1909 novel, *Vita Sexualis*. "Softies" are womanizers presenting as dandies, while their macho "roughneck" counterparts prefer sex with males, inspired by traditional samurai virtues. Newspapers sensationalize roughnecks as "barbarous" hooligans roaming the streets in packs hunting for *bishonen* (beautiful boys).

1926

The early Taisho period sees an influx of journals devoted to sexological knowledge, inspired by European psychoanalysis, frankly discussing a variety of *hentai* (perverse) desires.

1930

Junichi Iwata writes *Study of Nanshoku in Our Realm*, a detailed history of Japanese male-male eroticism.

1937

Wartime policies of ideological control prohibit the publication of "sexual and frivolous" texts.

1945

The end of the Pacific War ushers in a wave of progressive artistic and sexual expression. US occupation soldiers introduce the term *gei* (gay) into the popular consciousness.

1949

Yukio Mishima's autobiographical novel *Confessions of a Mask* deals with a young boy coming of age and discovering his sexuality. The frank portrayal catapults Mishima into literary stardom. The author's bodybuilding helps popularize the sport in Japan.

1951

Osamu Tezuka's *Astro Boy* helps shape the conventions and aesthetics of modern manga.

1952

Adonis becomes the first private-circulation "homo" magazine in Japan. Its American equivalent, *ONE*, also starts publication this year.

1958

A "gay boom" in the popular press results in widespread coverage of the contemporary *gei ba* (gay bar) and its constituent, the *gei boi*—a term associated with effeminate gay men and transgender performers.

1962

Fuzoku Kitan, a polymorphously "perverse magazine" (*hentai zasshi*) prints everything from heterosexual BDSM to lesbian erotica to beefcake photography and the artwork of Tom of Finland and George Quaintance, bootlegged from the American *Physique Pictorial*. Male nudes frequently appear on the magazine's cover.

1963

The first appearance of Go Hirano's artwork in *Fuzoku Kitan* magazine. In the following decade, his name will become closely associated with *Barazoku* magazine (1971–2004). Tagame writes that "the act" and the entanglement of male bodies occupies the central focus of Hirano's erotica: "The flesh of men fills the whole frame. Their massive flesh is all there is."

1964

A longtime contributor to *Adonis* and *Fuzoku Kitan*, Go Mishima switches to drawing for the new members-only magazine *Bara* (Rose). *Bara*'s title is a radical reappropriation of a gay slur comparable to the English term "pansy." Go Mishima (whose pen name pays homage to his gym buddy, Yukio Mishima) portrays the sexuality of rough-hewn, masculine Japanese men, including sailors and tattooed yakuza.

Gengoroh Tagame is born.

And gay life
is portrayed beautifully

1969

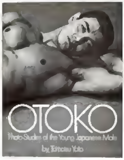
One of Japan's first feature films to explicitly deal with gay subject matter is Toshio Matsumoto's experimental masterpiece, *Funeral Parade of Roses*. Famous transvestite performer Peter stars as Eddie, a modern *gei boi* locked in Oedipal rivalry with the old-fashioned *mamasan* of a Shinjuku gay bar. The area is depicted as an urban melting pot of marginalized communities—artists, queers, hippies, and revolutionaries—which Eddie and her fellow queens navigate with bold self-assurance.

1970

Yukio Mishima infamously commits ritual suicide in a meticulously planned spectacle staged during an attempted coup of Japan's Self-Defense Forces.

1971

Founded by heterosexual publisher Bungaku Ito, *Barazoku* (Rose Tribe) becomes the first mass market magazine aimed at a homosexual male audience. To distinguish its masculinist identity from the transgender associations of the term *gei*, *Barazoku* opts to identify as a homo magazine.

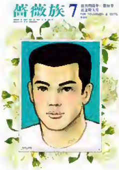


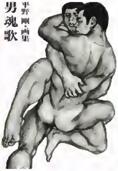
1972

Photographer Tamotsu Yato releases *Otoko*, dedicated to Yukio Mishima, Yato's close friend and mentor. The hugely influential book of male nudes uses traditional Japanese symbols to root male-male desire within Japan's unique historical context. Without a traditional publisher, Yato self-distributes *Otoko* through Shinjuku gay bars.

1974

Inspired by the popularity of *Barazoku*, two major gay magazines launch: *Sabu* (known for its "hard" erotic artwork—in large part thanks to the contributions of Go Mishima) and *Adon*, a former gay tabloid refashioned in the mold of *Barazoku*.



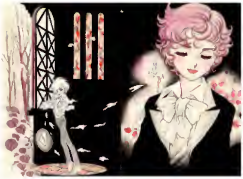


1975

The Tokyo Metropolitan Police's "Public Morals" office bans the April 1975 issue of *Barazoku*. Bungaku Ito is forced to pay a 200,000-yen fine, and Mansaku Arashi, author of the scandalous *Gay Journey to the West*, is also fined. Although Go Hirano deliberately refrains from showing the crotches of the men embracing each other in his illustration for *Barazoku*'s July issue, the image still provokes the ire of police officials, but sales of *Barazoku* double.

1976

Osamu Tezuka's thriller with homosexual themes, *MW*, is serialized in the popular *Big Comic* magazine.



1978

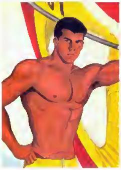
June (a phonetic nod to Jean Genet) is the first magazine for *shonen-ai* (boys' love)—manga drawn by women for women, depicting male-male romance and sexuality. BL had skyrocketed in popularity thanks to classic works such as Keiko Takemiya's award-winning *The Poem of the Wind and the Trees* (pictured left) and Moto Hagio's *The Heart of Thomas*.

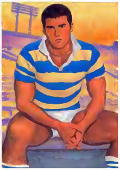
1982

Samson magazine launches. Originally an all-purpose gay magazine, in the 1990s it will become dedicated to the niche of older and chubby men and an important platform for gay manga.

1985

Barazoku publishes the first interview with an AIDS patient anywhere in the Japanese press.



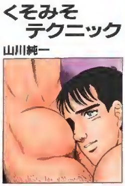


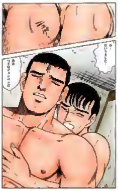
1986

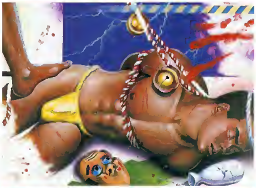
Artist Ben Kimura begins drawing for *Sabu*, becoming their cover artist in 1989 after Go Hirano passes away. Kimura's work focuses on atheletes, especially rugby players and swimmers.

Barazoku's 1986 special issue *Bara-Komi* is the first publication devoted exclusively to gay manga, including work by Kotaro Takemoto and Ryu Fujita.

Influential activist group OCCUR spins off from the Japanese International Lesbian and Gay Association.

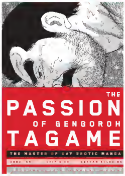

くそみそ
テクニック
山川純一





G-men
ジーメン
No.2
1,600yen

G-men
鍛えて磨け、男伊達。



1987

Bara-Komi publishes Junichi Yamakawa's one-shot manga "Kuso Miso Technique"—a matter of little consequence in 1987, yet the comic will rise to worldwide notoriety in 2002, when bootleg scans go viral on the Japanese message board 2channel. Consequently, an influx of interest in gay manga inspires an avalanche of piracy and the overseas misappropriation of "*bara*" as a genre label.

1988

Three decades after the original, Japanese pop culture experiences a second "gay boom," driven by the success of gay literature, including Hisao Hiruma's novel *Yes, Yes, Yes*, as well as the increased visibility of transgender personalities on television and a growing interest in foreign gay artists such as Robert Mapplethorpe and Edmund White.

1990

Sadao Hasegawa: Paintings and Drawings is published in England, collecting the artist's iconic oil paintings and illustrative contributions to gay magazines *Barazoku*, *Sabu*, *Adon*, and *Samson*. Hasegawa's work strongly references Japanese iconography but also weaves in a patchwork of symbols and aesthetic techniques derived from Balinese, Thai, and Tibetan Buddhist art.

1991

OCCUR takes on the "quiet" homophobia of Japanese society by bringing the first lawsuit against the Tokyo Metropolitan Government demanding equal rights for homosexual citizens.

Noriaki Fushimi's influential book *Private Gay Life* discusses the intersectionality of gender and sexuality. Eschewing homo/hetero dichotomies, Noriaki identifies as *hentai* (perverse).

1992

Gay writer and drag queen Masaki Sato's comments in the feminist magazine *Choisir* spark a debate on the ethics of female artists appropriating male-male sexuality in *yaoi*.

1994

Gengoroh Tagame's sadomasochistic tale *The Toyed Man*, originally serialized in *Sabu*, becomes the first profitable standalone book of gay manga.

Badi magazine launches, representing a new generation of gay culture.

1995

Gengoroh Tagame and two editors from *Badi* create *G-men* magazine, a powerful platform for gay manga specializing in "macho" representations.

1998

Barazoku ceases regular publication. Internet dating supplants the magazine's once-thriving personal ads. *Shonen-ai* manga flourishes, with more than twelve BL magazines and publishing monthly.

1999

Jiraiya becomes *G-men*'s sole cover artist, taking over for Gengoroh Tagame. Pot Publishing releases Tagame's 824-page historical epic, *The Silver Flower*.

Sadao Hasegawa ends his life in Bangkok.

2001

Kinniku-Otoko (Muscle-Man) magazine helps bridge the gap between *shonen-ai* and gay manga, printing homoerotic work by both male and female *mangaka*.

2007

Furukawa Shobou publishes Seizoh Ebisubashi's first standalone book of manga, *My Hometown Hospitality*, based on a novel by Kodama Osamu.

2013

PictureBox's *The Passion of Gengoroh Tagame* marks the first English-language collection of gay manga, followed by three more Gengoroh Tagame translations from Bruno Gmünder Verlag.

2014

The digital marketplace for gay manga expands through vendors like BOOTH, Digiket, and the Big Gym Data Market.

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